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A CANTICLE OF PAN

And Other Poems

BOOKS BY WITTER BYNNER

YOUNG HARVARD

TIGER

THE LITTLE KING

THE NEW WORLD

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

(an English version)

SPECTRA

(with Arthur Davison Ficke)

GRENSTONE POEMS

THE BELOVED STRANGER

A CANTICLE OF PRAISE

In Preparation

A CHINESE ANTHOLOGY

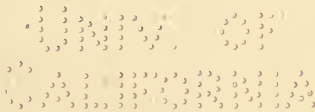
(with S. C. Kiang, Kang-Hu)

A CANTICLE OF PAN

And Other Poems

By

WITTER BYNNER



New York

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1920

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Class of 1907

TO THE
CLASS OF 1907

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To
THE HOUSEHOLD ON THE HILL
Edna Garnett Porter Garnett Elvira Foote

416295

Acknowledgment

At Berkeley, California, on the eleventh of November, 1918, I was asked for a poem with which the ending of the war might be celebrated in the Greek Theatre. From that request, and from the opportunity offered by an outdoor stage and by the assurance of a vast audience moved and ardent with the occasion, sprang the form which I have called a "canticle."

On December fourth *The Canticle of Praise* had its first presentation, before eight thousand people. Sam Hume and I took the parts of the two cantors; and between us stood four students, two of them soldiers, two of them sailors, with drums and cymbals, with fife and trumpet and bugle. In the hymns, led by Arthur Farwell, we had not feared unresponsiveness, for we knew of Percy Mackaye's successes with spontaneous choral music. We were hopeful also that a huge audience might be as ready to participate in lines of the verse as smaller audiences have been with responses to the poetic exhortation of Vachel Lindsay. And our suspense wholly ended when the first echo came back to us — "Liêge!"

To Porter Garnett I am much indebted for his watchful and able criticism of *The Canticle of Praise* as a poem for large audiences and to Sam Hume for encouraging and producing it and giving it the power of his voice and presence.

The Canticle of Pan was delivered in June, 1919, as the Phi Beta Kappa poem at the University of California. And, finally, *The Canticle of Bacchus* was performed under the star-tipped nave of a grove of redwoods.

S. C. Kiang, Kang-Hu, poet and scholar, has approved the essential accuracy of my English versions of several anonymous "Old Chinese Songs" from the Confucian Book of Poetry, dating, some of them, from a thousand years before Christ; and I owe to his friendliness at Berkeley my discovery of the native beauty of these and other Chinese masterpieces.

John Henry Nash of San Francisco has printed a very beautiful private edition of *The Canticle of Praise*; and an incorporated translation of Émile Cammaerts' poem *L'Amour de la Patrie*, had appeared in *The Metropolitan Magazine*; but this is the first public printing of the *Canticle* entire. Part of *The Canticle of Pan* has been printed in *McCall's Magazine*, the editor of which kindly permits reproduction of the drawing by Charles S. Chapman. *The Canticle of Bacchus*

was published recently in *The Harvard Advocate*. Others of the poems have appeared in *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Poetry*, *Reedy's Mirror*, *The Forum*, *The Bellman*, *McClure's Magazine*, *The Bookman*, *Contemporary Verse*, *The Smart Set*, *The Boston Transcript*, *The New York Tribune*, *The New York Times*, *The Metropolitan Magazine*, *The Occident*, *The Little Review*, *The Midland*, *Harper's Weekly*, *The Dial*, *Asia*, *The Touchstone*, *Youth*, *The Modern School*, *McCall's Magazine*, *The Trend*, *The Quill*, *The Ploughshare* and *The London Nation*.

WITTER BYNNER.

New York, February 20, 1920.

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Prologue



Youth Sings to the Sea

Take it, O high wave, take it, O deep! —
A song for the sky to catch and keep,
A song of the singing of many men
Who were born and dead and are born again;
While Youth to the trembling of his lyre
Sweeps his hand with a stroke of fire
And calls to the mountain, to the sea,
To make him the god that he shall be,
To make the beauty of his side
An inlet for a moonlit tide,
To petal his knee-bones with the gold
Of yellow lilies valleys hold,
To make his ankles winged things
Which out of the south the warm wind brings,
To make moon-columns of his thighs
And of his brow and breast sun-rise,
And to make of the sum of all of these
A human tree of mysteries,
An oracle of only truth
Moving in the leaves of Youth,
Answering striplings far away

That he can still be young as they
Who are god-like when they fling
Off from their beauty everything,
So to be always young as he . . .
Hear it, take it, sing it, sea!

A Cantic of Pan

A Canticle of Pan

*(The two Cantors stand, one at either end of a
concave screen of trees)*

The First Cantor

Come through a thousand years, and another thou-
sand years,

Come back through all the columns to the temple
of the sky

Where the sun was a god and the moon was a god
and stripling charioteers

Were led by the gods, by the sun and moon, to die.

Come through a thousand years, and another thou-
sand years,

Come through all the temples from here to Thes-
saly,

To the temple of the ocean, to the tossing of the
spears

Of sunlight and of moonlight by the sea —

Where a golden youth was singing, holding high
his lyre,

A Greek youth was singing, along his mortal way,

The challenge to beauty, the stealing of the fire,

The pæan of an athlete of the clay
To the wonder of his body unwounded by the
spears,
To the body purely born as spring is in a tree,
Born and surely dying as a wave disappears,
When the god of gods was beauty, by the sea.

The Second Cantor

Singing of the beautiful, singing of the strong —
And yet hear the sobbing hidden in the song!
For the master of man is death. And beauty can-
not save
But changing, forsaking, turns from the grave . . .
Only the gods are deathless. And who and what
are they?
Are they wise above desire, are they calm beyond
dismay,
Are they certain in their circle of compassion and
high will,
Starry in the midnight, sunny in the noon?

Pan (appearing)

They are hotter than the sun, they are colder than
the moon!
And I am Pan accusing, like the breezes of a hill.
They are jealous, they are angry, they are eaten
with desire,
Amorous of mortals, monstrous in their ease,
As terrible as ice and as anguishing as fire . . .

Once I went imploring them on my shaggy knees
To be more divine than lions, or eagles of the
air —

And what did the gods say, answering my
prayer! —

They laughed at my tail, they pulled my little
horns,

They ordered me back to my fellowship of goats,
They bade me raise a breed of sacred unicorns
To draw them in their chariots and comfortable
floats.

You think of them as tintured by the azure of the
sky

So that all their vexings and their villainies dis-
perse . . .

The beasts are bad enough to judge men by —

But let me cry aloud: The gods are worse! . . .

So I choose my young horses, my hoofs of the
hills,

My antelopes, my nightingales, my fins of the sea.
Among men, among gods, there are sinister wills
And no simple comrade for me —

O even the sea-nymphs and dryads and fauns

Are jealous conspirers and bickering shrews

And liars and lechers and sleep through the dawns
When I sweeten my pipes with the dews . . .

But the mountains are different — O mountainous
ways

Where the leap of a foot is a singing of praise!
And the ocean is different where waves never die
And the gust of a gull is a pulse of the sky —
Where all things are one thing and shout aloud in
me,

The mountain and the valley, the river and the
sea!

Hark the lion, hark the leopard, hark the elephant
and hark

The dove and the nightingale, the pelican, the
lark!

O my pipes pipe of everything, they hold an end-
less song —

Yet they never pipe far enough for all they pipe
so strong,

Never pipe contentment for all they pipe so long.
There are tears in their piping and no surcease of
the tears,

There are fears in their piping and no quieting of
fears.

There is laughter in my piping — but behind the
laugh an ache

For something I am calling and never can awake,
And I think I know what men mean who tell of
hearts that break.

The First Cantor

Why is he pausing now, straining with his eye
Across the multitudinous sky?

Pan

One of my stars is moving out of line
And is larger than the others and has a longer
shine,

And under it three men travel with its ray . . .
Could yesterday be night? Can tonight be day?

*(The People sing a Carol; the First Wise Man
enters)*

The First Cantor

Pan, listen! — hear what they say!

The First Wise Man (passing across)

I heard a shepherd blow his horn —
In Bethlehem a child is born.

Pan

And what should be so strange in that,
A little new Jehosophat!

*(The People sing a Carol; the Second Wise Man
enters)*

The Second Wise Man (following the other)

I heard a herald blow his horn —
In Bethlehem a king is born.

Pan

A king is born in Bethlehem?
For what? The Jewish diadem?
Gulls are laughing in the foam,
For Jewish kings are born in Rome!

The Second Cantor

Conqueror of conquerings,
Counsellor of other kings,
Comes a king from Nazareth,
To conquer Rome — to conquer death!

Pan

Death is the conqueror which man
Cannot conquer, never can.
However hard Jehovah try
To help a man, a man must die . . .
The man he fashioned out of sod
As witness to a jealous god,
And the woman too from the man's side,
Lived a little while — and died.
And the older gods were laughing strong
To see Jehovah come along
Still magnificent but pale
From failing, as a god must fail,
To inspire his man with breath
Deep enough to conquer death.

*(The People sing a Carol; the Third Wise Man
enters)*

The Third Wise Man (following the others)

I heard an angel blow his horn —
In Bethlehem a god is born.

Pan

That word goes through me as though rain
Arrowed my body with wild pain . . .
O once there was a prophecy
That one should come . . . if it be he —
Good-bye, my hills and valleys, good-bye, rippling
 shore,
Good-bye, winged leaves! Though I never loved
 you more,
More than I love you now, woods in bloom,
Yet good-bye, earth, they are calling my doom.
Good-bye, holly, mistletoe,
Good-bye, laurel, I must go.
They are casting me down from my dance of the
 spring
With a chant that Pan can never sing.
Sunset, moonrise, starry sky,
Ocean, lightning, rain, — good-bye!
(*He runs away*)

The First Cantor

An ancient oracle foretold the death
That Pan must die: how his unearthly breath
And earthly should be gathered in one groan
And he and all the gods be overthrown
By a new god born in a little town,
A truer god than they, wearing a crown
Of light they never wore, and how a star

Should make a pilgrimage, and how from far
Three wise and mighty men, coming to bring
Obeisance, should acclaim a child their king.

The Second Cantor

Now you shall hear an anguish smite
The silence of this holy night.
Hark, and you shall hear a cry
Shake the hills — for Pan must die.

Pan (entering exalted)

No, no! I am alive! I need not die!
I went to look at him, I pressed my eye
Close to a narrow crack beside his bed
And saw the starlight shining round his head,
And saw his little moving leg and his little moving
arm

And I forgot the oracle and no more harm
Was in the world for me at all, forever from that
minute,

Because I found a manger and a little baby in
it . . .

Everyone was sleeping. He was sleeping too.
But I lifted my pipes and softly I blew,
And a dove was on my shoulder and the lambs, I
felt them stand

Very close beside me. And then in his hand
I laid my sprig of mistletoe and my holly at his
feet,

And I leaned and touched his lips, and O the touch
was sweet!

I laughed. He laughed. No one else awoke
And only I, only Pan, heard him when he spoke.
He spoke not with his lips, nor wholly with his
eyes,

Nor to me, but within me — and O but we were
wise,

Wiser than his mother dreamed or his father
knew,

And O but we were happy, Christ and I, we two!
For he whispered to me:

*“Some day, Pan, they shall understand,
Though they try to do without you now, that over
sea and land*

*You are piping, piping — wiser than a word,
Deeper than death, sweeter than a bird —
The music beauty almost heard*

*When long ago you tried to play
Joy to the gods and they laughed you away.*

*I laugh too — but I watch where you go
And, when I am older, I shall follow you, I know.
And dance on the paths with you and sing on the
hills*

*With thrushes and with nightingales, with larks
and whip-poor-wills.*

*For you have sung together earth and air and sea,
And the binding of the hearts of men shall be the
song for me.*

*And the one is the other and the other is the one.
So pipe — with the music of your fervor and your
fun —
My laughter and my wonder, as you have always
done . . .
Then, note by note, those perfect notes that you
were dreaming of,
Till there is only peace, till there is only love.”*

The Wild Star

There is a star whose bite is certain death
While the moon but makes you mad —
So run from stars till you are out of breath
On a spring night, my lad,
Or slip among the shadows of a pine
And hide face down from the sky
And never stir and never make a sign,
Till the wild star goes by.

The Cardinal's Garden

Villa Albani

Here in this place which I myself did plan
With poplars, oaks and fountains — and with
sculpture,
The rounded body of the soul of beauty —
Here in this garden, by my own command
I sit alone, under the freshening twilight.

Not to my eyes shall be made visible
Ever again morning or noon or twilight,
Not to my eyes which are my servants now
No longer, save as servants in the grave.
But to my forehead and my finger-tips
The days give touch of bud and opening
And of their bloom and of their hovering fall.

The morrow shall be born with sighs and rain.
But this is peace, this twilight, this is pause
Between the sunny and the rainy day,
Pause for the elements and pause for me,

As though it were a silver brook that ran
Between the blinded day and blinded night,
Between the dust of life and the dust of death.

Why shall I sit here? Why are colonnades
And little paths and pagan statuaries
More subtly dear to my unseeing eyes
Than all the beaded letters of the books
Or the coloring of any bended saint?
Why do I hear the stealing feet of peace
Among these marbles more than anywhere,
Than even in that cell where I have been
True Christian and exemplar of the creed
To my own heart? There, not a cardinal
In a red pageantry of holiness
Before all comers, but a penitent
In humble nakedness before my God,
I found the potency of Jesus Christ.
And yet not there could peace be comforting
Like this. Sometimes I think that hell hath set
An outer court for me within my garden,
That it may mock me better in its own . . .
But, whether hell or old mortality,
This garden which I builded for my body
Is the one corner now wherein my soul
Finds rest and benediction in the twilight . . .
There in my cell, dreamt on the walls, arise
Those memories of craft and violence,

Of lust for carven images of beauty:
How in the night I sent my men to take
That obelisk which I had offered twice
Its value for and been refused — to bring
That obelisk and set it in my garden . . .

The Prince of Palestrina never dared,
Such has my might been, to recover it.
Still I can see him gaping at the trick
And wishing he might strangle me, the trick-
ster . . .

And though these useless eyes would make me
now

No quick report if that same obelisk
Should be abstracted on a newer night,
Yet how these fingers and this heart would know!

Why do my tears fall, that I sit here blind
To oaks and poplars, fountains and my sculp-
tures,

Before my cypresses and Sabine Hills?
Have I not seen them all a thousand times?
Are they not vanity? Can eyes outsee
The soul? Life, to an honest cardinal,
Old and enfeebled, should but celebrate
The sacrifice of Jesus Christ who died.
Time should grow short for prayer and prepara-
tion.

Why is it, then, that life has seemed to pace
More than enough its corridor of vigil,
But not to know the endless path of beauty
Beyond the entrance and the mere beginning!

Pray for us sinners now and at the hour
Of death! . . . And, even while thou prayest, I,
Who should incessantly be praying also,
I who am cardinal and might be pope,
Sit with my blind eyes full of pagan glory! —
Sappho, Apollo and Antinous,
And Orpheus parting from Eurydice!

First falls the breath before the drop of rain . . .
Before the rain shall follow, I have strength,
Praise God, still to support myself among
These marble temples, columns and museums,
These deities of beauty and of time.
Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee!
The obelisk is here. It has not been
Retaken. Pray for us now and at the hour
Of death. And I shall enter at my door
And seek the chimney-piece and stand before
My young Antinous from Tivoli
With lotus in his hair and hands, who once
Belonged to Hadrian. And I shall touch
Again the garment of Eurydice,
Wondering — when that final mortal touch

Summons Eurydice, summons my soul,
And when she turns and enters and is dark —
If Christ shall follow her and sing to her.

The Two Sentinels

*(Under the ruins of Pompeii a barman has been
found at his post)*

“ Soldier, I hear that you, as well as I,
Were steadfast on a fateful day:
While blind and ashen faces hurried by,
You watched the flaming rivers of the sky
Enter Pompeii.

I wonder at you, Soldier. Tell me why
You stayed immovable and chose to die.”

*“ I trembled, Barman, and I left my post.
But Rome herself came suddenly to stand
Beside me in the panic of that host
And held me with her sure imperial hand.”*

“ Rome, Soldier, Rome? Could even Rome defy
Flame’s roaring mouth and quicken you to die? —
Well, you had Rome to look to. Likewise I
— To speed my city on her way —
Opened a wine, a wine that winked its eye,
And under that intolerable sky
Drank to Pompeii.”

A Canticle of Bacchus

(The First and Second Cantors stand at either side of the stage. Bacchus enters, concealing with a vine-draped arm all of his face below the eyes)

The First Cantor

Why hide your face with vines, lad?

Why stand mysterious?

Show your face and tell us why

And what you want of us.

I wonder if I know you, lad.

I've seen your eyes before.

There's a glow in them as genial

As an opening door

With a yellow light behind it

And a handshake and a song

And a welcome to a fellowship

Where happy folk belong.

I wonder why your presence,

Half-hidden, seems to be

The reaching of the redwoods,

The slipping of the sea
And the swaying of the heart of wine
Within the heart of me.
Lad, are you the merry god
Of vine-leaves?

Bacchus (showing his face)

I am he.

Though not so merry nowadays
As I dared to be
In the days of Alexander,
I am Bacchus, I am he
Whom young men choose, old wives chastise
And solemn men abhor,
Because the truth is in my eyes,
Because my mother bore
A light and easy soothsayer,
Natural and wild,
Fierce and happy as the sun,
When Bacchus was her child.
I stole the grapes from her other hand,
She pretended not to look,
And the heat of my fingers turned them to wine
And that was the milk I took,
Till I grew and flourished and became
The most beloved boy
Who ever danced among the leaves
Of elemental joy.

And everybody laughed my name
And pulse was never quicker
Than when the unforbidden hills
Blessed the world with liquor
And everybody drank it
And everybody knew
Festival-hymns and holiday-tunes . . .

The First Cantor

Here are singers too! —
“ For he’s a jolly good fellow —”
Sing to him — all of you!

The Company (singing and concluding)

“ For he’s a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny.”

Bacchus

And how can a jolly good fellow
Bear to say good-bye?
O let me pledge you in a drink
Before I hide my face!

The Second Cantor (refusing the proffered cup)

No, thank you. You have earned too well
Your measure of disgrace.

Bacchus

And who are you who will not drink?

Silenus (entering eagerly)
By the gods, I'll take his cup!

The First Cantor
He's a tale-telling teetotaller.

Silenus
A meddler and a pup!

The Second Cantor (to Bacchus, indicating Silenus)

Look well at him, if you wonder why
I spurn what you propose —
At the purple viney pattern
Of the veining of his nose!
He followed you and the dryads,
He dreamed a dream in his youth,
And his house has tumbled about him
In ashes — that's the truth!

Silenus
What do I want of houses
While a cave holds off a storm?
And what do I want of a hearthstone
While there's wine to keep me warm?

The Second Cantor
You had a wife who pleaded,
With children at her knees!

Silenus
My wife was like Xantippe,

Who scolded Socrates
When he went the way of drinking men
With Alcibiades —
When he went the way of thinking men
And dodged the homely pot,
As I have dodged the missiles
Of the whole confounded lot.
Sir, can you quote me wisdom
From men who never tipple
That has made a stir in the world like his?
No, sir — not a ripple! —
So here's to poets, philosophers,
By all the seven seas,
Greek, Roman, Gallic, British, Dutch
And Persian and Chinese!
Though it double me rheumatic —
Here's to Socrates!

Bacchus

You it is, with disregard
Of measure and time and place,
Who have brought on both of us this day
Of exile and disgrace,
Yet, Silenus, you're forgiven,
For I'd rather live in a hut
Away from all my friends but you
Than have had you learn to shut
A virtuous mouth like a trap for birds

And a fist like a purse for squeeze —
You've an open mouth and hand and heart,
And they have none of these.

The Second Cantor

Are you meaning me?

Bacchus

Yes, even you,

Too careful to be bold.

Before you take a step, you look,

Before you're young, you're old.

Before you think in your own terms,

You think in other people's

And stilt your life as orderly

As pulpits and as steeples.

What can the ocean mean to you,

Draining the shore,

And the wind that drinks the redwoods

And waves its arms for more,

And the dogs that romp in the flowers,

And the cats that sing in the alleys,

And the skylarks in the zenith,

And the waterfalls in the valleys?

In this happy, crooked, drunken world

How you can bid us go

As dry as dust and as straight as a corpse

To a graveyard, I don't know.

The Second Cantor

Do the dogs and the cats and the skylarks
Need booze to make them gay?

Silenus

What about cats and catnip?

Bacchus

Men need more than they! . . .
O the fruit of the tree of knowledge
Was a liquor on the tree —
And when they chose the apple,
Adam and Eve chose me!
And the children of Jehovah,
As well as the children of Zeus,
Were the better for their knowledge
When the godhead turned them loose.
For there's nothing so sure as freedom
To make the heart rejoice.
The happiness of manhood,
The guerdon of life — is choice!
And a road that is rough is smoother,
So be it the road you choose,
Than a smooth road chosen for you
Where what you win you lose . . .
I am a godly companion,
A touchstone and a test,
And who chooses with the other gods

Bacchus — chooses best.
For what is life itself but wine,
And what am I but life?
And they who cut our kinship
Use a deadly knife.
And even he who, reckless,
Comes too close to a god
Is wiser than he who numbers his bones
To fertilize the sod . . .
Hear the truth from Bacchus —
My blood is spring in the veins,
And he who would deny the spring
Shall perish for his pains . . .

Silenus

There's a place in the woods where wild apples
grow
And the feet of young Bacchus shall tread them,
And if venturers find us, they'll ask us when they
go
What nectar it is we have fed them.
We shall hew a rock-hollow and seal it with clay
And mark it with Bacchus's fillet —
Wild honey and attar of roses and hay
Shall sweeten our wine and distill it.

Bacchus (moving slowly away with Silenus)

There where the sun sets, winey in the mountains,
There where the moon uplifts her frosty cup,

Bacchus shall come and free the merry fountains
And drink the winter down and the springtide up.
And a welcome shall well there for fortunate com-
panions,

From Silenus or from Bacchus, whichever you pre-
fer.

We shall crown you and lead you through the wild-
grape canyons

And comfort you with apples and laugh at the cur
Who would harry at your heels and snarl the
woods about you,

We shall hear him faintly barking beyond the
happy peaks.

Exile is sweet when fools are left without you
And the wild wine of wisdom is the color in your
cheeks.

You may learn there of nature, as Bacchus has
learned,

How hemlock is deadlier than grapes are to quaff,
Or if you never find us, or have left us and re-
turned,

You still shall hear us echoing the sound of your
laugh . . .

So remember us and praise us, though the time be
long,

And sing a song of other days when Bacchus came
and went.

And so the heart of Bacchus shall be happy in your
song

And the foot of Bacchus steal within your tent.
For you who once have known me never can for-
get me.

Your other friends are mortal, Bacchus is divine.
Now for a little while evil days beset me . . .
But sing me into exile "for auld lang syne"!

*The Company (singing, as Bacchus and Silenus
leave them)*

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot

"And never brought to mind,

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot

"And the days of auld lang syne?"

(Even the Second Cantor joining, with a cup)

"For auld lang syne, my boys,

"For auld lang syne,

"We'll take a cup and drink it up,

"To the days of auld lang syne."

Vintage

The vintage-feast in Vevey came
 Ten years ago today,
Led by a lad clear as a flame,
Bacchus in garb, Bacchus in name,
A boy whose body was his fame
When the vintage-feast in Vevey came
 Ten years ago today.

Marble of limb but with melting eye,
 Human and warm and young,
He passed the village maidens by
Who could not help themselves but spy,
Some openly, some secretly,
His laughing lip, his half-clad thigh
 Moving free and young . . .

In Vevey comes the vintage-feast
 And Bacchus comes today
A newer youth with the orient east
At his temples, an auroral priest —
Dogged by a riotous lurching beast,
The Bacchus of that other feast
 Ten years ago today.

Point Bonita

The little launch was called The Monk
That carried him to sea
With seven cronies, not one drunk
But sober as could be:

Blight, Wilson, Scott, two Petersons,
Stevens, McPherson, seven,
And they were hearty sons-of-guns
With strange ideas of heaven.

“ The best saloon on the water-front
Was Johnson’s, called ‘ The Hold.’
Pete Johnson was the reason on’t.”
And then the cronies told

How they all had sat at Johnson’s place,
Less than a month before,
And seen a look in Peter’s face
When he cleared his throat and swore

That he wouldn’t last another moon,
For he felt it in his bones —

“ Boys,” he had said, “ I’ll be going out soon,
And these’ll be cold as stones,

“ This left hand looking now so stout,
Lifting the glass for a clink,
And this right hand which I hand about
As I ask you boys to drink,

“ To drink me a pledge and a solemn vow
By all the gods there are
That you’ll bottle my ashes and stand in the
bow
And scatter me over the bar.

“ I’ve leaned on a bar at sea and ashore
So long that I’ve got the trick;
To be anywhere else for evermore —
The idea makes me sick.”

On Peter’s brow was a line of sweat.

“ Fishes are quick and free;
But worms with their crawlin’, pokin’ fret —
O keep ’em off o’ me!

“ Give me no solid, cloggin’ grave,
But the width and the drift o’ the seas! —
Bury me out where wind and wave
And ashes go as they please!

“ Oblige me? ” he asked them. And like one
man,
Quicker than a wink,
They said, “ Aye, Peter,— a damn good
plan! ”—
And pledged it with a drink . . .

It stormed from the Saturday Peter died
Till the cronies came together
And looked at the jug with Pete inside,
Then looked outside at the weather.

And when they had watched the gale three
days,
They nodded, though it blew,
“ We can’t sit round till the jug decays —
Let’s see old Peter through! ”

They took the jug aboard The Monk,
They put their oilskins on,
They faced the sousing sea — not drunk,
Sober every one.

A wave came over them half way out
And slapped them down in the sea
And all but two of them went to the bout
Bailing, hip and knee,—

Two at the helm and five of them
 Bailing, one with a mug . . .
When The Monk went crazy and shook her
 stem,
 They'd catch a quick look at the jug,

Where old Pete Johnson urged them on
 And gave them extra breath,
Just as if he hadn't gone,
 As if it wasn't death.

And at last, when the mourners pulled
 around,
 With The Monk for a pitching hearse,
And — close off Point Bonita — found
 The chapter and the verse,

Stevens, McPherson, Wilson, Blight,
 Scott and the Petersons,
Bared their heads and stood as they might
 While the sea went by like guns,

And Peter Johnson flew over the bow
 And was scattered away in the foam.
And they wished him as well as they knew
 how
 Before they put for home . . .

Now the wind was lighter going back,
But the course was heavier far,
For the mate of the trip, out on their track,
Was leaning again on a bar . . .

And as soon as they might, in Peter's place,
They leaned on a bar as well —
And looked each other in the face;
And when they drank his knell,

Blight, Stevens, the Petersons, Wilson, Scott,
McPherson, crew of The Monk,
Each sober crony of the lot
With just one drink — was drunk.

Look in the Water

Look in the water and tell me quick
Who is the girl I see
Where the grasses are wavy and bright and thick
And the shells and the pebbles play their trick
Of winking winks at me!

Doesn't the water make her sick?
How long her hair has grown!
She turns like a little green worm on a stick.
Is it really a girl? O tell me quick!
She moves her head on a stone . . .

Or is it a fish with the wonderful face
All fishes wish they had?
For her feet are done up in spangles of lace
As tightly tied as the narrow place
Is tied on the tail of a shad.

A wave goes rippling over her eye
And she calls, "*O Little Friend,*
I have watched the waves of the sea go by

*And ships go down and sailors die,
New sailors without end.*

*“ I have watched them all, but by and by
Somewhere they all go down
And sail no more; while here am I
Breathing forever the sea and sky
And wishing that I could drown,*

*“ Wishing that I could take your place
And grow up big and tall,
Then die and change —”* Look, there's a race
Of minnows, a flash goes over her face —
And nothing is there at all.

Romance

What and where am I and who?
I can never tell. Can you?
Can a sunset after rain
Or a moonlit wave explain,
Can a willow tell you why
Or a star? No more can I.

Follow me in any face
To some far and lovely place.
If you find me, be content.
Never ask me where I went
Seven moons ago nor when
I intend to come again.

Am I foolish? Am I wise?
Never ask me to advise.
Ask a hawk about his wings,
Ask a robin why he sings,
Ask a tree to be a city,
Ask of me to pause and pity.

Who is shiftier than I?
I can go without good-bye.
I can come without your leave,
Come to comfort when you grieve.
Ask of me to stay or go,
Will I once obey you? No!

I am nowhere, somewhere near.
I am no one, someone dear,
I am cruel, I am kind,
I am all there is to find . . .
What am I and where and who?
I am heaven. I am you.

Property

I have an endless garden . . . and I don't know
where it is,

For I found and lost the title in a castle in Ca-
diz.

There are many little garden-gates, creaking like
gulls,

And a sea full of ships there, with gold on their
hulls . . .

But why so many ships and why so many gates,
Only my lost title-deed in Cadiz relates.

I have the tallest tower there that ever touched
the blue,

But since I don't know where it is, I don't know
what to do . . .

For I went there in a dream once, a wild way-
faring,

Glad and magnificent beyond all caring . . .

I wish I had the reason now that then I had

For being so magnificent and being so glad.

But who knows the measure of the distance to
fare? —

I hurried back to Cadiz. The castle wasn't there.

They told me that a mist had come and arrows of
rain

And then a gust of darkness — and every window-
pane

And doorway of the castle had vanished in Ca-
diz . . .

And what can you do with property, when you
don't know where it is?

Vagrant

I come and go
And never stay,
I pick and choose
A night, a day,
I find, I lose,
I laugh along,
I will not know
Right things from wrong.

I pity those
Who pity me,
I ask no boon
But being free —
And so the moon,
My polished stone,
Shines and shows
I lie alone.

Gipsying

A gipsy-hand beckoned,
My pulses went hot
And I said, " O be happy,
Be reckless! Why not? "
So I ran like the devil,
I laughed like the deuce,
I was happy awhile . . .
But at last — what's the use?

The gipsying ended,
The joy of it went,
And nothing was left
But a three-cornered rent
In the knee of my trouser
Where, solemn, forlorn
And repenting to heaven,
I knelt on a thorn.

Fire-Music

Sparrow in the burning birch,
Ghost who once at set of sun
Whistled in your home and church —
Though you see it now undone,

Yet with your memorial mirth
You can sing like a caress,
“ *Never shall a bit of earth
Die and change to nothingness!* ”

Spirit in me! — when I die,
Will you laugh with equal glee? —
Will you whistle, where I lie,
Something of the sort for me?

Sweet Chariot

I sat one night and I said to the moon,
Come down over the foam,
Come on, my chariot, swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home!

And the moon swung low, and the moon swung
low,
And the moon swung down the sea,
Swung down, that chariot, low, that chariot,
But never did come for me.

But the earth came on, the earth came on,
Came swinging up the sky —
I know my chariot, the earth my chariot!
Sweet chariot, swing high!

Chieftains

Not the first growth of spruce and pine
Nor the second nor the third
Was what I saw in ordered line
And what at night I heard.

But often when old light would hold
Their shadows in the lake
While the sun would sink with dreams untold
And a first faint star would break,

I watched them come to the water's edge,
Leading a vanished race,
Warrior-chiefs from wood and ledge
And undiscovered place;

I saw them stand, each feathered head
Unmoving and unmoved,
The captains of a people dead
Which first had fought and loved.

Then in the night I heard the air
Stir with a moving line,
Till in the dawn were standing there
Hemlock and spruce and pine.

From Sea

Clear as a leaf of fern
Against a crystal sky,
Over the trailing stern
Hovers a butterfly.

Half-seen to southward sink
Sails that only now
Began, at the northern brink,
Half-seen to lift their bow.

Westward a fishing-fleet
Is anchored, dark of hull,
Eastward, in retreat,
Circles a single gull.

Not anywhere is land,
But under a soft sun
Peace is near at hand,
Simple and vast and one.

Master of Moons

Along the Havana wharves was a sugar-train —
And an iron black, unloading bags from it,
His torso bare, with valleys of wet muscle,
His rhythm sure as that of tigers pacing.
And across from the car was a house of many
 women,
Two of them quarrelling, a black with a yellow,
And the little yellow woman swung her palm
Against the black cheek of her adversary
Who, towering massive as a mountain-side,
Let loose an avalanche of angry might.
And they fought and blazed, and each of them
 tore off
The other's only garment, whirling in bronze,
Till out from the sugar-car black waters leapt
And lifted the giantess to a naked shoulder
Like a great log along a stream at midnight
And carried her away into the distance.

In Havana

I never saw your face,
But I saw you every night
Lean in the self-same place
Against the waning light.

There on your roof of the town
You would come out, like me,
To watch the sun go down
Beyond the sea.

And into my towered place
I would climb up, like you,
I never saw your face,
I never needed to.

Haskell

Here in Kansas is a school
Made of square stones and windows,
Where Indian boys are taught to use a tool,
A printing-press, a book,
And Indian girls
To read, to dress, to cook.
And as I watch today
The orderly industrious classes,
Only their color and silence and the way
The hair lies flat and black on their heads pro-
claims them Sioux,
Comanche, Choctaw, Cherokee,
Creek, Chippewa, Paiute — and the red and blue
Of the girls' long sweaters and the purple and
yellow,
And the tawny slant of the machine-made
shirts . . .

Noon — and out they come. And one tall fellow,
Breaking from the others with a glittering yell
and crouching slim,
Gives a leap like the leap of Mordkin,

And the sun carves under him
A canyon of glory . . .
And then it shadows, and he darts,
With head hung, to the dormitory.

Pittsburgh

Coming upon it unawares,
A town of men and millionaires,
A town of coal-dust and of churches,
I thought of moons, I thought of birches,
Goals forgotten in the faces
Of the swift who run the races,
Whip-poor-wills and misty meadows,
Musk-rats in the river-shadows,
Robins whistling five o'clock,
Mornings naked on a rock.

The Patricians

There is a cold and admirable breed of men
Who exercise, between the poor and God,
An overseer's authority conferred
By the great Landlord. And their ken
Is constant, for they have themselves in mind.
They guard God's money and are stirred
By the extent of His abundance. They have
heard
His voice incorporating Heaven, where people
blessed
With means may venture to invest.
Not the abrupt corrupting kind,
Using their power to pile a Pittsburgh den
With plunder, these, in their gentler way,
Fifth Avenue, North Side, Back Bay,
Are the Patricians. Stewards for the rest,
They hide their talent lest they lose it, bind
Their sight with silken bands and, self-possessed
Because they dream themselves preferred
Above the eccentric friendships, vulgar, odd,
Of a Millionaire whose merest interest

Is more than all their capital combined,
They make their wives invite Him as a guest,
“ O *don't forget to ask that fellow, God!* ”

The Two Thieves

I like the thief who's an honest thief,
Who can steal and wink and laugh,
Whose eye is clear and his grin is bold
For friend or photograph.

But set me a thousand miles away
From the unconditioned crook
Who can pry into his neighbors' prayers
And steal a pious look!

The Tree

Still are we soldier, Gentile, Jew,
And hear Him praying low,
“*Father, they know not what they do!*”—
Except that now we know

Which are the thieves and which is He,
And, every day of the year,
We bind him not with rope on the tree,
But with nail and thorn and spear.

A Dead One

All night I walk the street,
Hearing the newsboys shout . . .
My soul, my body and my feet,
I cart the things about,
But any fellow that I meet
Can see I'm down and out.

The end! I know it too
And don't care very much,
For I have lost my point of view
Of hell and heaven and such,
And am losing now — some of us do —
Memory, even touch.

A boy too hot to bide,
A friendly kid, well-made,
Stopped me the other night and tried
A sample of my trade.
But I just felt myself outside,
Walking — till he paid.

The other night, I said?

No, it was long ago.

Time runs like a squirrel in my head,

Swift but somehow slow.

I wait — and wonder am I dead

Or dancing in a show.

I'll find out good and quick

When I take tomorrow's beat.

To face the wharves ought to make me sick,

Where drunks and dead ones meet.

But it doesn't. I'll soon learn the trick,

And it'll ease my feet.

I'm forgetting the face of my first,

My star of Bethlehem,

The first I ever kissed and cursed,

Clem was his name, yes, Clem.

Two others gripped me like a thirst . . .

And I can't remember them.

And that's the way it goes.

Something has snapped inside.

Those three? — when I'm forgetting those,

I guess my soul has died —

And I might have kept it, held it close,

Sung to it when it cried.

The Army drums away.

They want me to enroll.

It's not too late for them, they say,—

Jesus will make me whole.

He had his chance. But he wouldn't pay

Five dollars for my soul.

A Fortune-Teller

Turning the secrets from her pack of cards,
Warning of sickness, tracing out a theft,
Guarding from danger as an omen guards,
Her hand grew withered as it grew more deft . . .

Till in the stuffy parlor where she lies,
Now to these clients, neighbors, debtors, friends,
Truest is proven of her prophecies,
“ I shall be dead before December ends.”

That old man, facing us, who many years
Carried the marvellous message of her art,
Now hear him how he tells us with his tears
The simpler larger wisdom of her heart.

For she was quick to share the good that came,
So that young mothers turned at last and slept
And loafers gruffly revered her name —
Yet more than all she gave away she kept,

Kept red geraniums on her window-sill
And a gay garden in that narrow plot

Fenced-in behind her house. You'll find there
still

Her hoe, her rake, her rusty watering-pot.

Bright, in the midst of all these dingy yards,
Her roses, hollyhocks and pansies grew;
As if some happy jester in the cards
Whispered the gayest secret that he knew.

The Man with the Testament

The Passer-by

Put that away, don't whine at me with that,
I'll give you something if you'll quit your bluff.

The Man with the Testament

No, honest, Mister, by this book I live,
It's food and drink to me, this little book.
I haven't any overcoat, but warmth
Comes in my pocket from my Testament.
Honest to God, my Saviour warms my soul,
Also my body, like a miracle.
It's food and drink to me, this little book.
I'm like a blind man and it leads me round.

The Passer-by

It's what you live on, yes. You know your game,
The kind of fools you meet and how to fetch 'em.
Put it away. Take this and get a drink.
There's quicker warmth in alcohol, old man.

The Man with the Testament

Now, sir, you're talking and I guess you're white.

But, God, the Bible catches 'em! I thought
It out one night. The Gospel says the poor
Is here for keeps. You see, that pleases those
As has good money and their neighbours none.
They're glad to pay me something when I say
That Christ has taught me to be satisfied,
It kind of eases 'em along their way.
It's food and drink to me, this little book.

The Passer-by

Use it, old man, use it for all it's worth.
A better use is coming by and by
From that same book, but you'll be dead by
then.—

Remember that he said, "Give us our bread,"
Before he said, "Forgive our trespasses."

The Man with the Testament

You're white, you are. So let me tell you this.
I was an acrobat. I went with a show
Seventeen years. I fell and hurt my spine,
I couldn't do my business any more.
Tumbling was all I knew, I'd worked at it
So long. I always hoped I'd work at it
Again. And while I waited round to see,
I drank a bit. The drink got hold of me —
And here I am, sir, with my Testament.

The Passer-by

What do you live for? What's ahead of you?
What makes you want to keep on going, old man?

The Man with the Testament

I'm always hoping something will turn up
To put me back again where I belong.
And if it don't, I've got a job all right,
A job they can't take from me. Listen here,
There's fellows, young ones, coming out of jobs,
Joining the bread-line, and I talk to 'em,
Tell 'em my story, how a man can work
Seventeen years and then be left like this.
And that's my job, to make 'em discontent,
Me that Christ teaches to be satisfied.
I am. My job's a job worth living for.
Something may come of it when men like me
Has thought enough and made the young ones
think.
Thank you, I'll take it if you'll let me buy
One drink apiece for us? — Here's how, young
man!

The End of the Road

There's always lots of fussin' on a farm,
Summer 'n' winter,
Leastwise I've found it so.
But I go about when I c'n get a chance,
To 'Scutneyville or, like last week, to Windsor
Where I heard the band, a darn good band . . .
The town o' Windsor pays 'em for the season
Three hundred dollars —
Pretty fair pay for sittin' still an' tootin'.
Most of 'em work regular in the machine-shop,
Over a thousand hands where there used to be five
hundred.
An' takin' all the boys that's come with the boom,
there's lots of talent.
What was I sayin'? O yes, the river-road
An' all the roads that lead to any place,
I know 'em well . . .
But there's a road, a little pesky road,
That starts off toward Ascutney, toward the moun-
tain,
An' nobody I hear of ever took it more'n four
miles back,

Where a house was once,
An' they only use it now to reach a mowin'.
But all my life I've meant to see the end on't,
Not that there's any use o' seein' it,
But just to satisfy a kind o' notion for seein' where
things go.

I wa'n't more'n six years old first time I went to
take that road.

But I found a berry-patch.

And since that time I've allus meant to go on

An' never have . . .

Till 1915 June the 27th I got aroun' to it.

The rest of 'em went drivin' somewhere else. I
footed it.

An' when I fetched up at the turn

An automobile come by

And someone hollered, "Where does that road
go?"

I said, "I've lived here all my life

An' it ain't gone anywhere."

They thought I'd said a terrible funny thing,

But it wa'n't so blame funny . . .

Well, sir, I walked a little piece o' that darn road,

Till the sun turned on so doggone swelterin'

That I'd 'a' been a fool not to go home

An' lay down quiet in the hammock.

When a man gets a chance to loaf, what does he
want to foot it up a hill for?

That was all right, but what do you think has happened?

What do you suppose I read in Monday's paper? I read about myself an' what I said.

They didn't give my name, an' that's a comfort, For I don't like gettin' into newspapers.

But who do you think was in that automobile? — The President! —

Mebbe he has a kind o' notion, too, The same as me,

For seein' where things go . . .

I kind o' wish I hadn't turned back home, No, not because he asked me, not for that,

But just to satisfy a kind o' notion

That's bothered me since I was six years old.

A Song in the Grass

Sometimes I wish the day might pause
And not become the night,
Or I wish the night might have no cause
To interchange with light.

Some nights I wish the day might break,
Some days I crave a star,—
But mostly I have learned to take
The moments as they are.

A Red-Wing

Cluck and hover, cluck and whine,
Whose step so disturbs you? Mine?
Why not cover and dissemble
All this trouble, all this tremble?
Why not calmly let me be
With caraway and timothy,
Let me pass and never see
Black and scarlet in the sun?
Or can men like me have done
Harm to birdlings? Is that why
You hang and flutter, dart and cry?
Or is it humor in your breast,
Is your flurry all a jest
Of cluck and worry, flap and bristle?
Surely you have found the best
Of protection for a nest,
Thickening burrs and spikes of thistle,
Cluck and hover, cluck and whine,
And a poison-ivy vine,
Cluck and chirrup, cluck and whistle.

Meadow-Shoes

My shoe-soles, wet in the meadow,
Sang like the chirrup of birds —
But like birds of only a note or two,
Like persons of few words.

And, O my shoes, how hard it is
To tell the joy you touch!
I know, for I have tried to sing
The things I love too much.

Grass-Tops

What bird are you in the grass-tops?
Your poise is enough of an answer,
With your wing-tips like up-curving fingers
Of the slow-moving hands of a dancer . . .

And what is so nameless as beauty,
Which poets, who give it a name,
Are only unnamings forever? —
Content, though it go, that it came.

The Sandpiper

Along the sea-edge, like a gnome
Or rolling pebble in the foam,
As though he timed the ocean's throbbing,
Runs a piper, bobbing, bobbing.

Now he stiffens, now he wilts,
Like a little boy on stilts!
Creatures burrow, insects hide,
When they see the piper glide.

You would think him out of joint,
Till his bill begins to point.
You would doubt if he could fly,
Till his straightness arrows by.

You would take him for a clown,
Till he peeps and flutters down,
Vigilant among the grasses,
Where a fledgling bobs and passes.

The Enchanted Toad

Three times you had neared — I unaware —
My body warm in the sand and bare.
Three times you had hopped your silent track
To the arch of shadow under my back.
And each time, when I felt you cool
And turned on you and, like a fool,
Prodded your exit from my place,
Sorrow deepened in your face.
You were loth to leave me, though I threw
Handfuls of sand to quicken you.
You would look as you went and blink your eyes
And puff your pale throat with surprise.
Three times you had tried, like someone daft . . .
O could it be that evil craft
Had long bewitched, from the man you were,
Some old Chinese philosopher
And wanted you dank and thwarted you dumb
And given you three times to come
And beg a friend to set you free? —
And had you spent them all on me?

The Enchanted Swans

Out of a fairy-tale they flew above me,
Three white wild swans with silk among their
wings —

And one might be a princess and might love me,
If I had not forgotten all such things.

They flew abreast and would not pause nor
quicken,

One of them guarded by the other two,
And left me helpless here, alone and stricken,
Without the secret that I thought I knew.

The Swimmer

The reach of peace, the sky, the pines,
Leave me no more perplexed,
In which a memory divines
That bodies, buried, yet arise
Across the reach of all the skies,
Unburied and unvexed,
As arisen are the grass, the pines,
In upward-grown, delighted lines —
As a swimmer with one wave declines
And rises with the next.

Carvings of Cathay

All the world was near today . . .
The waves were carvings of Cathay
Thrown and broken at my feet,
And these old desert-sands were sweet
With dead pagodas, buried tiles
And ocean-grass for miles and miles.

Every little tuft of green
Was a brush-stroke on a screen,
Mounds and dunes made a redoubt
Good for keeping Tartars out,
And a temple-cloud was dim
At the sea's imperial rim.

This, the ocean I was on,
Confucius witnessed from T'ai-Shan,
The knees of Buddha made the sign
Of calm that I composed with mine,
And as many as the sands
Were Kwan-Yin's mercies and her hands.

I could hear a dragon-whelp
Mewing in a maze of kelp,
Gulls, with turnings, flashes, flares,
Filled the wind like paper prayers,
And capping me, like Him, from sun,
The snails of thought crawled one by one.

Through a Gateway in Japan

A torii stood, three miles above the bay,
A gate of sacred ground,
And when I wandered through a little way,
I paused and found

No temple-steps, no lanterns and no shrine,
Only divinity —
The solitary presence of a pine
Facing the sea.

Japanese Notes

In the House of Lafcadio Hearn

I left my name today
Before him and Buddha,
And knelt among his books,
And had tea with his wife and two children
And bowed low to them . . .
And then in his garden,
When his wife picked for me the petals I wished,
His son said,
“ But he liked the maple best,”
And brought me a spray of young leaves.

In the Yoshiwara

She sat as white as moonlight
When the sea is still.
She moved as bright as moonlight
When the sea wrestles with the shore.

In a Temple

This was the fortune I was told:
If you work hard all the time,
Good-luck will attend you like a steady wind.

In a Theatre

As the wooden blocks clack
For the curtain to rise,
Step after step I hear his wooden clogs
Clacking through the night to my door,
For the curtain of my heart to rise
On my own actor,
My beloved.

In a Poem

This night last year,
An old woman dusted the paper shutter
Very carefully,
That the shadow of the pine-tree
Might be quite perfect.

In a Painting

I have guided you many a day
Up the infinite mountain.
And you have not seen till now,
At the summit,
That the mountain is made of skulls.
Are you asking me whose?
Your own!

In Kamakura

In Kamakura, near the great Diabutsu,
When I had sat a long time on the ground
And been gathered up, forgetful of my face and
form,

Into the face and form of endless dream,
I found among the booths a little pendant Buddha
With the steel of a round mirror for His halo . . .

So that a brooding head still intervenes in bronze
Between my face and the image of my face,
And I cannot see myself and not see Him.

The Neighbors Help Him Build His House

A Japanese Folk-Chant

A Young Man Sings

Out come the leaves,
The long green leaves
Of the young pine-tree in spring —
So may the days,
The growing days,
Yield you everything.

The Others

As part is true
May the rest be true,
True in the heart of the spring!

An Old Man Sings

Blest be the house,
Honored the house,
May a woman's womb, adored,
Which was Buddha's house

And Shaka's house,
Here be the house of the Lord.

The Others

As part is true
May the rest be true
And here be the house of the Lord!

Chinese Notes

In Manchuria

In my heart flutter wings
Toward the little bright bough
On the brown hillside,
Toward the solitary tree, blossoming —
My heart flies there,
Leaving a shadow of azaleas.

In Peking

My eyes are blinded
By the flying dust of the dead.
And my heart smiles
At my own motions
In the wind.

The Ming Tombs

Blown shadows, through the grass,
Not of the kings,
But of the builders and carriers . . .

It is the kings now who seem chained,
And the others free.

In Shantung

A burnished magpie

Strutting in the sun

Claiming a path among furrows of rice —

But in the distance

The quiet trot

Of a blue-coated horseman.

Chinese Drawings

A Father

There is a fruit, my son,
Bitter to the taste at first
But afterward sweet . . .
It is called advice.

A Tea-Girl

When the fish-eyes of water
Bubble into crab-eyes —
Tea!

A Wanderer

Last night is a thousand years ago —
But tomorrow is a new mist.

A Lover

The plums and cherries are blossoming,
My heart too is unsheathing from winter —
And it has all happened in one day.

A Vendor of Rose-Bushes

I am very poor,
Anyone who can buy from me
Ought to do it.

A Painter

I cannot paint
The growth of the spirit,
But I can paint an old man
Watching the smoke of incense
Join the sky.

A Lady

She does not see the tea her servant brings
Into the garden,
Her hands have fallen down from the instrument
She was playing,
But the strings can still answer
The cold fingers of autumn.

A Scholar

Having won his diploma,
He rides a horse of air
Through ten miles of the color
Of apricot-blossoms.

A Philosopher

What though they conquer us?

The tea has come.
In at most nine hundred years,
Someone will conquer them.

A Horseman

Beyond him are many inlets curving among moun-
tains
And on the way a temple,
And there is gold on the harness of his horse
Whose head and foot are uplifted together . . .
But the rider sits quiet now,
As he rides toward the shadow
Of the second willow.

The Chinese Horseman

There were flutes once merry with stops
And bottles round with wine,
Lips dewy as with attar-drops
And breasts of deep moon-shine,
There were thrushes in the market-rows,
Caught from the circling air,
And no bird sang so true as his,
And there were hills for prayer —
But over the bridge the rider goes,
The rider who was fond,
Leaving what was, crossing what is,
By the bridge that leads beyond,
Beyond the many songs he knew
And sang to lips he kissed,
Beyond the rounded green and blue,
Beyond the mist.

And the scholar who may question him
Will hear only the sound
Of wind-curved waves at the river-brim
And of willows trailing the ground

And will see the quiet of five bays
Pointing like a hand
Toward the five valleys that divide
The long mountain-land
Beyond the white azalea ways,
Beyond the moonstone wave,
Where no one may be lost nor hide
Nor may be saved nor save,
But where the rider may forego,
And laugh no more nor moan,
And of all pulses never know
Which were his own.

Tiles

Chinese magicians had conjured their chance,
And they hunted, with their hooded birds of glee,
The heat that rises from the summer-grass
And shakes against the sea.

And when they had caught a wide expanse
In nets of careful wizardry,
They colored it like molten glass

For roofs, imperially,

With blue from a cavern, green from a morass
And yellow from weeds in the heart of the sea,
And they laid long rows on the dwellings of ro-
mance

In perfect alchemy —

And before they ascended like a peal of brass,
They and their tiptoeing hawks of glee
Had topped all China with a roof that slants
And shakes against the sea.

The Pure-Hearted Girl

(An Old Chinese Song)

The ospreys are echoing us
On the river-island —
Where is the pure-hearted girl
To be our princess?

Long lotus, short lotus,
Leaning with the current,
Turns like our prince in his quest
For the pure-hearted girl.

He has sought and not found her.
Awake, he has thought of her,
Asleep, he has dreamed of her,
Dreamed and tossed in his sleep.

Long lotus, short lotus,
Pluck it to left and to right,
And make ready with lutes and with harps
For the pure-hearted girl.

Long lotus, short lotus,
Cook it for a welcome,
And be ready with bells and with drums
For the pure-hearted girl.

Colloquy

(An Old Chinese Song)

“ You with the collar of blue,
I cannot come to you,
But you, if you please, are free —
Then why not come to me? ”

“ *You with the girdle of blue,
I cannot come to you,
But you, if you choose, are free —
So why not come to me? ”*

“ O you who fancy the new,
The day when you go for a view
From the tower lasts for me
A month or two or three! ”

Home

(An Old Chinese Song)


Great trees in the south
Give me no shelter
And women loitering by the Han
Leave me cold.

O Han too deep for diving,
O Kiang too long for poling!

Faggots, brambles,
I cut them with a will —
But those girls facing home,
I should like to feed their horses.

O Han too deep for diving,
O Kiang too long for poling!

Faggots, artemisia,
I cut them with a will —
But those girls facing home,
I should like to feed their colts.

- 
- Han too deep for diving,
○ Kiang too long for poling!

The Two Rivers

(An Old Chinese Song)

Where you fish between two rivers
With your tall bamboo,
When the oar-light quivers,
My heart comes to you.

Far from the new home gleaming,
I see the old again,
And you who sit there dreaming
Between the K'e and Ts'uen.

To the left the Ts'uen is moving
And the K'e flows to the right —
And I long for you whose loving
Was once my delight!

You hear the rising, falling,
Of the boats of yellow pine,
You hear two rivers calling —
One of them, mine.

And a young girl's girdle-jewel
Is the oar-light that you see —
For O my heart is cruel
And goes where I would be!

The Silk-Dealer

(An Old Chinese Song)

You were young and a dealer in silk
And appeared to have no thought but of silk,
But I was the silk you desired.

And we crossed far over the ford
And you seemed to have no thought but of me
And of marrying me in the autumn.

But before autumn came I was weeping,
For you seemed to have no thought but of spring,
And the gate was an empty shadow —

Till I laughed your name in the gate,
Where back you came, your young face bright
With the blessing of fortune-tellers.

And I rode away as your bride,
Before autumn had tarnished mulberry-leaves,
Mulberry-leaves and a woman . . .

All this was years ago.
And now I am crossing the ford again,
Where the mulberry-leaves are yellow,

With no change in my heart
Which beat through poverty those years with you.
But I tell my brothers nothing . . .

O to be facing old age
Hand in hand, instead of this remembering
How we crossed the ford together

And there, beyond the marshy shore,
How you seemed to have no thought but of me —
And how I let my hair down!

The Forsaken Wife

(An Old Chinese Song)

The wind is no more from the north.
But when there was storm and hail
None was closer to you than I.
When there was woe and misfortune
You chose me,
And now that ease has come
You have found fault with me
And left me.

The wind is not yet from the north,
But the hill shall be bleak again
And there shall be no blade of grass unwithered,
No tree not bowed.

And then, when you are alone,
You shall think of one
Whose faults are all you remember now
And never a virtue.

Change

(An Old Chinese Song)

The days and months do not last long,
The springs and autumns follow one by one,
And when I watch the fall of the flowers
And of the leaves and of the trees,
I know that even the loveliest person
Little by little must change.

Temple-Inscriptions

Half-way up the hill
And into the light.

Where the heart is,
There is Buddha.
How can the hills of the spirit
Be only in the Western Quarter?

The distant water,
The near hills,
The deep blue of the clearing sky.

What is sacred is universal.
The three religions have for their soul
One principle.

The pure wind,
The bright moon,
The clear and thoughtful heart.

Night

(From the Russian of Polonski)

I have loved you, O silvery night
Why? Who knows —
When my love has brought me more pain than
repose!

Yet I love you, unanswering night
Kinder to everyone else than to me
With the touch of your light
Of the stars and the moon, making diamond-bright
Flower-paths on the cliff, trailing gold on the sea,
But bringing no quieting beauty to me
And no end of my years
And no ease for my tears.

Why should I love you then, why,
Silent, silvery night,
Since you give no reply to my heart and its cry
And I have only pain from you, never delight?
Who knows why I love you? O not even I —
Though I lift up my love and implore you, yet
nothing is there

But the vague of the silvery air
And a whisper that peace and the answer are far,
Are beyond the last gleam of the ultimate star.

Russians

To Stephen Graham

*(With acknowledgment of suggestions from his
book, "Undiscovered Russia")*

An Englishman

I went an Englishman among the Russians,
Set out from Archangel and walked among them,
A hundred miles,
Another hundred miles,
A moujik among moujiks,
Dirty as earth is dirty,
And found them simple and devout and kind,
Met God among them in their houses —
And I returned to Englishmen, a Russian.

A Concertina-Player

I earn my copecks at the beer-houses,
Or on a pilgrimage;
And — shall I tell you? —
I often play to beggars — and they pay me . . .
I lost my eye by hoping to be rich.

Some Germans built a factory,
And people said to all the boys:
“ Go work there and be rich ! ”
You know the German way ? —
Using up men for making things ?
What are things for but men ?
Yet when they took my eye with their machinery
They made me this, they made a man of me,
They turned me to my music,
As you see me,
Tramping, never starving,
In prison, never sorry,
My music and my freedom and the road —
The earth my hostess
And the sun my host.

A Prophet

Tomorrow is Elijah's Day!
The world comes to an end!
Release your souls, release your souls,
For whoso in his body keeps his soul
Upon that dreadful day
Is damned!
Hang yourselves and drown yourselves,
Die by the knife, the gun, the rope,
All shall please God!
And if your women and your children falter,
Then kill them first.

The cheerful giver pleaseth God! . . .
I take my leave of you,
I lead the way.
Hand me the rope,
Make sure the noose will slip . . .
Forgive me if I have not saved your souls,
As I forgive you for not listening.
My mother I forgive for bearing me,
My father for begetting me,
Mankind for being like me.
So farewell!
Receive me —
God!

A Drunkard

They ask me what I sing about —
Who knows? . . .
Vodka bakes me in my innards,
Drops of it are in my beard,
And I find my wife as wicked
As I feared;
For she barred the door against me
And I haven't any roof,
O she sent the devil walking
On his hoof!
The canary puts her babies
In a cosy little nest
And the wolf, for all his prowling,

Goes to rest —
But I haven't any family
And I might as well be dead,
O I haven't any corner
For my head! . . .
They ask me what I sing about —
Who knows? . . .
Vodka burns me in my innards,
And I'm crying in my beard —
And yet nothing is the matter,
I am comforted and cheered.

A Miserable Maiden

I'm a miserable maiden
And my petticoat is torn —
Though I'm thirty, not a baby
Have I born . . .
Though my face is very pretty,
Yet a face can never save,
And they'll carry me unmarried
To the grave.
I have gone to many ikons
And my tears came out and ran
And I begged the saints for mercy
And a man . . .
Nursing other people's babies
For eleven years I've done,
But I haven't any children,

Not one!
O Madonna, my Madonna,
Pity me and make me brave,
Till they lay me, cold and single,
In the grave . . .

An Old Man

I shall die soon;
For I hear a voice inside my skull,
Blowing like a wind . . .
My son, his wife and all of them want me to die.
I can do no more work,
And so they beat me and beat me
And give me no sugar in my tea . . .
Last week they put me to work making my coffin.
They hurried me, lest I should die
Before it was done.
Now that it's done, they make me sleep in it —
Yes, every night they make me sleep in it . . .
If I should oversleep some day —
They might — before I waked —
There!
You hear it now?
That wind inside my skull,
Trying to blow my soul out!

A Boy

On the edge of the narrow river
My little dear sits

With her little white feet in the water . . .
Overhead in the air
The gray geese fly.
Fly away, gray geese, fly away,
For your touch might ruffle the water,
Or your shadow darken the water,
And I couldn't be seeing them so clear,
Her darling white feet!

A Girl

They say that on this night of St. John the Bather
Twelve blossoms open in the woods
And one of them is happiness . . .
So I go out to find it in the woods —
Past the young men who leap through the lighted
 bonfires,
The young men brave with vodka . . .
And in the woods will be other girls —
And there may be — one young man . . .
O help me, bless me, dear St. John the Bather!
O let me miss the blossom —
And find him!

A Revolutionary

Father! —
I wanted to come back and make you see.
I could have shown you.

Nothing has hurt me like your misunderstanding
me . . .

And you, my mother,
Your honey-lips, your apple-cheeks,
If I could have had the comfort of kissing them
And been comforting to you,
It would not be so hard . . .
I shall be here ten months, before I go.
Perhaps they'll let you see me.
Come, if you can.
For I have no sweetheart but you —
And life.
And life is a strange sweetheart
To see me young and strong and clean,
Yet to have no wish for me,
To let me give up, go out —
When I have cared so much!

A Communist

I shall need no priest,
Only my people,
Communion with my people.
*"Forgive me, north and south,
Forgive me, east and west!"*
That will be all —
And enough.

A Moujik

Hola, ye Siberian steppes and stars,
Why has he so much
And I nothing?

Why has he so much who does no work?
Why does he eat and drink and make merry,
When I who do all the work
Have nothing?

Hola, ye steppes and stars,
Why has he so much
And I nothing?

Pan Sings

They are all mine for my song,
The right, the divine, the wrong,
The sailor with wings of the sea,
The cooley who sings to a tree,
The poet with a moon in his river,
The red with a runé in his quiver,
The black with a harp in his feet
Playing sharp, sweet,
And even the Englishman
Somehow singing with Pan,
The right, the wrong, the divine,
They belong — they are mine!

Robert Browning

An amateur of melody and hue,
Of marble outline and of Italy,
Of heresies and individuals
And every eccentricity of truth;
And yet an Englishman, a healthy brute
Loving old England, thrushes and the dawn;
A scholar loving careful gentlemen;
A man of fashion loving the universe;
A connoisseur loving dead artists' lives,
Their names, their labors and their enemies;
A poet loving all the ways of words;
A human being giving love as love,
Denying death and proving happiness —

When you love women because youth loves women,
And when you love a woman because heart
Understands heart through more than youth or
age
Or time, and when you marvelously become
The man whom Carlyle and whom Landor
loved —
You are life's poet by a poet's life,

But when you set yourself about with words,
Abracadabra, bric-à-brac and the dust
Of piled confusion, toying with obsolete
Prescriptions, and when owlish lenses hide
Your eyes until you marvelously become
A ponderous, pondering apothecary —
You dispense remedies, but not to me! . . .
So I take down your bulky book of records,
Turn to those certain pages where you tell
The beauty of a shoulder or reveal
The pure and simple permanence of love,
And am content to learn by a lazy glance,
Through other passages, how you conserve
The true susceptibility and pathos
Of bishops, mediums and murderers,
Manage the rhythm of fantastic souls,
Mark in the fault something to profit by,
Challenge the far perfection resident
In imperfection's opportunity,
And, more magnanimous than most of us,
Finding yourself in all humanity,
Forgive humanity for what you find.

A Portrait

There are two of them:

One is easy-going, with a forelock of beauty,
His mouth an avenue for words natural to the
heart,

His heart an avenue of likings and aversions,
His mind less given to ideas than to arguments
And less to neighbors whom he knows than to dis-
tillers whom he does not know . . .

And yet his heart and mind and mouth make
music;

The other, patient and convinced of the breath of
life

As the one breath of many people,
A man of tenderness and understanding,
Is full of speech but dumb
And, with everything of good to sing,
Cannot make music.

But is it so ill-portioned as it seems?
Or is it balanced and acceptable?
Is it not music?

You Told Me of Your Mother

You came to town tonight
Wearied and worn of heart, no feeling left,
You came to town tonight
And, meeting me who hardly knew you,
You told me of your mother, of the memories that
mingled and ordained
Her heart your refuge and her life your minister.
You told me of your mother, naming her with a
proud smile,
Comparing her with women whom we knew.
But on your mouth brimmed heartbreak
Because you were no longer at home, waiting the
minutes through,
Helpless, unhelping, an atom of life, made of her
life
You looked at me, and in your eyes
Wandered the human woe and could not rest.
Why had she borne you, to be made of her,
To take her life and hold it unfulfilled,
To break a part of it away that might not be re-
stored

By her love or by yours or any tenderness
Or any grief.
Hour after hour, day after day,
Life had assembled its ironic facts
And hurt your heart with them
And left you nothing but desire
To be obedient and mindful of her, to abate
The beat of gay unhappiness
That had shut out her simple word.
Heart touches heart but briefly in this world
And faith is lightly taken and the grave
Is full of unacknowledged love.
You could not sit at home there, separate from
her,
And face the wing of death
That makes of silence hurricane.
You came to town tonight,
Met me by chance and tried to laugh with me
At lesser things. And all the while
Death blew with life alternate on your brow . . .
Then suddenly you rose, cried out upon yourself
For coming and for laughing, clenched your hands
and hid your forehead
For admitting life and its absurdities
When death was the companion you had changed
For me . . .
O I am humble. But I tell you this,

That greatness was upon me when I looked be-
yond the dim horizon of your eyes
And saw arisen like a perfect sun
The rounded wonder of eternity,
Your death, her life, beyond the reach of time,
Commingling me and all men in their dawn.

To a Young Passer-By

You have the look my cousin had
When he was young as you.
But the look my cousin has today —
Is that to be yours too?

What would you say if I stopped you now
And said what I have to say
And told you a simple way to keep
The look you have today,

To believe that hate is always the lie
And that love is always the truth,
To believe to the end, yes, even alone . . .
But who can talk to youth!

The Desert

To David Greenhood

The world was good but was empty
Of all but mottled sand,
When out of the blue above it
Stretched a Hand
Whose fine and fiery fingers,
Making the breath of men,
Placed on the rim of the desert
Adam again.

You Told Me of an Eagle

To Worth Ryder

When you told me of an eagle, caged,
Sitting on his dead tree
And facing motionless
That opening toward mountains
And that air for wings,
You turned your head
Like an eagle caged.

And when you told me of a leopard
Pacing his bare floor,
Your hand curved back and forth
Like the motion of a leopard . . .

And beyond the iron of imagination
Crept toward the desert hills.

At a California Homestead

To Jack Lyman

Hills of haze bordered your valley
And fountains of roses your old home,
Where I had never been before
Yet climbed again the stairs of my childhood

And found on the wall two swallows, em-
broidered,
Threading over stitches of water
And saw, through the honeysuckle window,
The stone-wall falling into woods . . .

But I have left the childhood room,
Down the stairway, bending my head,
Out of the gray house, past the roses,
Into these unfamiliar days.

On Leaving California

To Elvira Foote

There's a long line of iron track
With mountains at the end,
And I who leave am looking back,
Through them, to a friend,

To California, to a bay
Inwinding from the sea,
Where swords of sun and water play —
Not tonight for me . . .

But the eucalyptus still was there
At owl-time with no moon;
And as the morrow grew aware,
So shall I be soon

Of the household on the hill,
The two beloved pines,
The color of the window-sill,
The pointing of the vines, .

And I shall see your face unite
Tomorrow with today,
And watch it changing like the light
Of waters in the bay.

Away from California

To Edna Garnett

They try to show me a moon here,
Forgetting that I went
Up the hills of Berkeley
Into the firmament.

They try to show me a sun here,
“It glitters bright,” they say,
Forgetting that I watched the fog
On San Francisco Bay.

They try to show me beauty,
To ease my heart's desire
For a face of California
Profiled with fire!

Reminder

To Haniel Long

Rise, lad, let the world grow weary,
Linger not with snailing things,
Lift and where the winds are veery
Ride them with your larking wings,
Leave the thunder plunging after
And the lightning, where you range
On the plumes of love and laughter
Through the crooked gust of change!

A Dinner-Table

To Scudder Middleton

It was a dinner-table and the talk
Except for you would have been smooth and com-
fortable,
Revering money mostly and its whims.
But you were there and danced around the table,
Light on your feet and laughing in the room
And young and hard to follow.
They could not be your partners in that dance;
And they rebuked such manners in a proper world
And scored your faith with facts.
Yet all the time they watched a light that danced
with you.

Darkness as old as time towered about you,
From aged crags the rocks fell down,
And yet you danced impetuous, a very fool of
light,
The swift, impatient partner of the sun.

The House of Music

To Florence Blumenthal

Those corridors of calm where beauty paced,
With wonder on her smiling lip, those heights
Where went columnal gray antiquity
Veiling her youth with curious memories,
That round and carven fountain where leaned love
And watched the breathing bosom of her tears —
All were forgotten in the echoing silence
Of the lone figure, in that house of music,
Of hope still fingering a shaft of sun.

Voices

To Sara Teasdale

O there were lights and laughter
And the motions to and fro
Of people as they enter
And people as they go . . .

And there were many voices
Vying at the feast,
But mostly I remember
Yours — who spoke the least.

Two Poets Reading Together

To Wilfrid Wilson Gibson and Walter de la Mare

The ancient elements of poetry
Have come together here, two kinds of art,
In Gibson the old wizardry of the heart,
In De la Mare the heart of wizardry.
Gibson has told how harsh the world can be
To humble folk with dreams who have to part
From dreams awhile, and De la Mare can start
Dreams tiptoeing beyond adversity.

For Gibson words are people, everything
They suffer and enjoy, and in the end
The sufferings are not so great as the joy.
For De la Mare people are words that bring
New magic to the ear, strangers that lend
A book of fairy-stories to a boy.

To One Young as a Rose

To Rose O'Neill

There never was so young a child,
There never was a rose so wild,
There never was a lip that smiled
 So wise of all the world,

Save you, a rose of suddenness
Young as an infant's first caress —
And your dear lip of bitterness
 Deep within sweetness furred.

In a River-Town

To Edwin Arlington Robinson

Brave listener to the melodious heart,
Its broken rhythms, its beating in the night,
Accurate scribe, the figures of whose art
Subtract, divide, add, multiply aright,
We who came after, reverent and wise,
Went visiting your river-town and you
And, haunted by the quiet of your eyes,
Yet saw them beautiful and found them true . . .
And now when ecstasies of youth subside
And shadows darken the importunate will
And neighbors are away and friends have died,
We learn compassion on your evening-hill
And, by forgiving, are ourselves forgiven,
Near an old apple-tree petalled with heaven.

Till Spring

To Sarah Ernst Abbott

Frail through the earth you came, but flowering
With courage of the sun, with wisdom of the rain.
Now, blown to earth by a sudden wind of pain,
Your beauty rests from venture till the spring.

In Memory of a Young Painter

To Warren Rockwell

He dreamed of Italy and Greece:
His heart was sure that Rome,
The Forum, the Acropolis,
Athens, were beauty's home.

He waited hoping to the end
For Greece, for Italy;
But with a family to befriend,
His way was never free.

Attentive he approved them dear,
Shielded them day by day
From want, while softly year by year
Italy drew away.

Yet beauty which his eyes could see
Made them adore and shine.
And what in Greece or Italy
Has done as much for mine?

Richard

To Richard Mansfield 2nd

The fretful brow
Is smoothed away,
The little smile
Has come to stay . . .
He was uncertain
Now and then,
But Richard
Is himself again.

Happy, hasty,
Wanton, wild,
So young a sage,
So old a child,
He was bound to fret
Among ordinary men . . .
But Richard
Is himself again.

The Boxer

To Jack London

For how could you grow up, boy of the world?
You were not meant
To be forgetful and content
And sober, on whose brow youth curled
Unkempt. Time had no right to tell
You how to go. And so with all your vim
You made a gay adventurous pass at him.
He struck. You fell.

You dared to be young. That, in the sight
Of Time the Champion, was tantamount
To challenge. So you came chaffing,
Defying, sparring with him as an angel might . . .
And now are still. Or do you hide your face to
use the count,
And are you laughing?

Aloha Oe

To Queen Liliuokalani

Aloha, valiant queen, who to the end
 Made of indignity a crown
And not until you died would condescend
 To lay your kingdom down,
Child-woman, queen of children, born for fun,
 For play, for make-believe, increase,
At last your heritage, earth, water, sun,
 And take them now in peace.

To Shepherds and Wise Men

In Memory of Anna Howard Shaw

A star danced and she was born
To hold its dancing in her eyes,
To be a guide to the forlorn,
To be a beacon to the wise.

She was a rising of the dead
To prove they had not died in vain,
And ghosts of the uncomforted
Followed laughing in her train.

She was a living benison
To prove the potency of birth
With the dear honor she has done
To generations of the earth.

She was herself the starry light
Leading still to Nazareth,
Moving lovely through the night,
Dominating even death . . .

Follow, then, to every town
When an angel blows his horn,
Where a light is leaning down,
Where a little child is born.

Rain

To Celia Keays

They tell me that we tenderly keep
The happy things,
Forgetting pain.

There was a night when I could not sleep
For happiness of the sound
Of rain

Along the ground.

And in the morning-sun, from east to west
I felt the dancing wings
Of a mocking-bird.

And of all the sounds I ever heard
I hear those oftenest,

That rain still falls, that mocking-bird still sings —
Though Celia went away
That day,
Not to come back again.

Night

To Celia Keays

Celia, when you bade me
Good-morning, I would wake
Quick again on your account,
Eager for your sake.

Yet at morning or at noon
In the clearest light,
Is there any voice as near
As your voice at night?

Or has anyone alive
Ever come and said
Anything as intimate
As you are saying, dead?

An Ode to a Dancer

To Isadora Duncan

O Keats, thy Grecian urn has been upturned
And from its ashes is a woman made,
To dance them back again as when they burned
In young antiquity and pipes were played! —
And who that early woman was that danced
Them dead, thou, Keats, wert born too late to
know
And born too early for her later birth.
And yet thy lips of poesy could blow
Both lives, until their ankles met and glanced
Between the dead world and the unborn earth.

Here is thy living witness from the dead,
With the garment and the measure and the
grace
Of a Greek maid, with the daisies on her head
And the daring of a new world in her face.
Dancing, she walks in perfect sacrifice.
Dancing she lifts her beauty in her hands
And bears it to the altar, as a sign

Of joy in all the waters and the lands.
And while she praises with her pure device,
The breath she dances with, O Keats, is
thine!

Life rises rippling through her like a spring,
Or like a stream it flows with deepening whirl.
Leaves in a wind taught her that fluttering
Of finger-tips. She moves, a rosy girl
Caught in a rain of love; a prophetess
Of dust struck on the instant dumb with pain;
A lovely melancholy being, wild
With remembering, with groping to attain
The edge and entrance of a wilderness,
To play again, untroubled as a child.

She strikes at death. But the escaping foe
Awaits unwearied, knowing every wile.
Forward she comes to take the final blow —
And in defeat defies him with her smile . . .
Upward she bares her throat to the keen thrust
Of triumph: —“ *O ye gods of time who give
And take, ye makers of beauty, though I die
In this my body,— beauty still shall live
Because of me and my immortal dust! —
O urn! Take back my ashes! It is I!*”

Isadora

To Her Six Dancers

Beauty came out of the early world,
Her hyacinthine hair still curled,
Her robe still white on auroral limbs;
And her body sang the self-same hymns
It long ago had sung to the morn
When death gave birth and love was born.

And once again her presence proved,
As most immortally she moved,
That in her meditative eye
The child of death can never die
But dances with inspired feet
On every hill, in every street.

She raised her hand — and Irma came,
Theresa, Lisel, each like a flame,
Anna, Erica, Gretel: the tread
Of life still dying, never dead . . .
And like a bird-song in a wood,
Within their very heart she stood.

Tolstoi

Awhile I felt the imperial sky
Clothe a sole figure, which was I;
Then, lonely for democracy,
I hailed the purple robe of air
Kinship for all mankind to share;
But now at last, with ashen hair,
I learn it is not they nor I
Who own the mantle of the sky:
Silence alone wears majesty.

Saint-Gaudens

He called: and forth there came
Not wholly veiled,
Forth from the earth,
Silence made visible.
Touching no finite answer on that mouth,
Yet his fine fingers found reply
And from the light upon his soul
He drew the light of the unlighted tomb,
From man and woman both
The image of the unimagined face,
And left here in this Rock Creek burial-place
The arm of life,
The veil of time,
The uncorrupted presence of the dead.

Whitman

As voices enter earth,
Into your great frame and windy beard
Have entered many voices,
And out of your great frame and windy beard,
As out of earth,
They are shaken free again . . .

With the thunder and the butterfly,
With the sea crossing like runners the tape of the
 beach,
With machinery and tools and the sweat of men,
With all lovers and comrades combining,
With the odor of redwoods and the whisper of
 death,
Comes your prophetic presence,
Never to be downed, never to be dissuaded from
 singing
The comfortable counsel of the earth
And from moving, athletic, intimate, sure, non-
 chalant,
Friending whoever is friends with himself,
Accusing only avoiders, tamperers, fabricators,

And yet touching with your finger-tips
All men,
As Michael Angelo imagined God
Touching with sap the finger-tips of Adam.

Across the Ferry to Fort Lee

Across the ferry to Fort Lee
One Sunday twilight we set out.
And I loved you and you loved me
Shyly, sharply, tenderly,
And each heartbeat between us was the hushing of
a shout.

Among the youthful trees we came,
New as ourselves, breathless and dim;
And, leaving behind the ripples of flame,
Each of us named the other's name
And we stood there rooted like a double sapling,
limb to limb.

Sabbath was in the little town
And sleepy people in the cars;
We wandered east again, to see
The city of infinity
Over our heads and, down below, the little New
York stars.

And so we happened, in the dark,
Upon an inn called Belvedere . . .
Lured by a lit and beckoning mark
As at the entrance to a park,
We stood before an ancient house that promised
modern cheer.

As German as a proper brew,
Our host himself opened the door.
I think the round-necked German knew
That you loved me and I loved you,
I think he must have welcomed lovers many times
before.

He led us to a low long room,
A public room with a private air:
At one end, shining in the gloom,
A Christmas-tree was still in bloom,
And members of his family sat each in a special
chair.

They sat in a circle round a stove,
Contentment in its anchored guise,
Like fishing-vessels in a cove
After the daylight. And we throve
In our own inward harbor and our home was in
our eyes.

He brought up heavy, hearty food,
And heavy, hearty fun as well,
And then he left us to our mood
And, as if to prove that the world was good,
He crossed to the piano and played us *Wilhelm
Tell*.

But we forgot him presently
As we retold the chosen way
We had planned at dawn to find Fort Lee,
I loving you, you loving me,
And we lived again each hour of the dear long
day.

An aged woman parted our dream,
As into a kiss there comes a pang;
On the mother's face was many a seam
Of years and only a little gleam . . .
"Bitte, 'Der liebe, lange Tag'!" she said. And
so he sang.

His folds of fat faded away
And one by one her folds of pain;
Hearing him sing "The Dear Long Day,"
She was no more ancient and gray,
She was her God's eternal love, she was a girl
again.

At first she nodded her head and tapped
Her foot along the simple beat,
And then we saw her clasp her chapped
And withered hands, her eyes were rapt,
And in and out on her toothless gums her lips were
singing sweet.

And through my own tears I could see
Upon your face the tears that fell,
I loving you, you loving me.
We were that moment old as she . . .
We know what she remembered — and beloved,
it is well.

Alma Mater

And one enlisted for my land
When war let loose the sundering flood;
And one — because his father's blood
Was hot in him — let go my hand.

I lost them both,— but not before
I kissed them both. The battle, done,
Defeated one, exalted one . . .
Ask me not which I love the more.

1914

Jane Addams

It is a breed of little, blinded men
And fickle women, who would laugh at her
Because in time of war she sets astir
Against the sword the legions of the pen
To write the name of Jesus Christ again
And on this page, a swarming broken blur,
Restore the word of the deliverer
Above the little words of blinded men.

In time of peace, which is a time of war
More subtle slow and cunning, she has brought
Together enemies in armistice . . .
Yet, in the face of what she did before
Against the war that centuries have fought,
We ban her from a little war like this!

1915

To Germany

(For her son, Karl Liebknecht, who alone in the Reichstag stood up against war)

I love thee for one hero, surely one.
My spirit straightens, like the tempered blade
Of his unmasterable weapon made
In heaven's high forge, not hell's. I had begun
To dread thy horrid shadow in the sun,
To hate thee for thy national parade
Of heathen men idolatrous of Trade,
Shouting the great commandment of the Gun.

But thou hast bred out of thy land a man
Of braver metal than thy generals;
Above the thunderbolt his courage calls.
He is thy founder and thy guardian,
He is thy hero, Liebknecht, who alone
Under the lightning lays thy cornerstone.

1915

Foam

The ocean tosses patterns at my feet —
Large, irresistible, minute and lost.
A busy rabbit-headed grasshopper
Carves a green blade down to the yellow spine.
Over the mounded sand hot-foots an ant.
A ghostly spider pauses in the sun.
Across the sea those armies, that small chaos
Of rabbit-headed hot-foot ghostly men
Are ocean-patterns brought me by the surf,
Large, irresistible, minute and lost.

1916

Sands

I fell on a dune and slept,
Sharp grasses by my head:
While armies far-off warred and wept,
I joined the earth instead . . .
Until I moved my hand
And was awake again
And shook myself out of the sand
To the cold wind of men.

1916

News of a Soldier

A stem of grass, by my left foot,
Stands upward from the root.
A blade of grass, by my right hand,
Has bent downward to the sand . . .

Life, to me strange, to him was dear.
But he is gone and I am here
And on his earth I move my feet
Which were still when he was fleet.

I see my hand sweat in the sun
As if with labor he has done —
For he took earth as for the strong,
While I have heard earth as a song,

A song intricately sung
Of me older, of him young . . .
Can I believe now, he submit,
I on the earth, he under it?

1916

The Wounds

I saw a German soldier
Off duty lift his gun
And shoot a Belgian hanging
By the neck in the sun,
A Nazarene, a peasant,
Hanging till he died,
And the German soldier's bullet
Made a hole in his side.

I saw a Belgian soldier
Walking in the dark,
And he stumbled on a German
Who lay still and stark,
A Nazarene, a peasant,
Who dies in many lands,
And the Belgian soldier's bayonet
Pierced both his hands.

1916

Niagara-on-the-Lake

I heard them march and drill,
Canadian men and boys :
Around a cross upon a hill
I heard a martial noise.

O shall I never know,
But do as I did then? —
At Rome's commanding, always go
To mock my God again?

1916

Kit Thurber

Unseen These Thirty Years

Up that river Norwich lies
And the little gate
Which used to click me off to school
When I was late . . .

A rhododendron in the yard,
A well, an arbored seat
And, behind the house, a cherry-tree
Where robins dared to eat.

And past the cherry, past the grapes
And the hen-house and the shed
And the bean-poles, cabbages and beets
And the apples overhead

And past the mystical fringe of trees,
 Bushes and stumps and ferns,
We used to find a world-wide river
 And its endless turns.

Robinson Crusoe wandered there
 And the Swiss Family swarmed
And other vagabonds we knew
 Whom you and I performed.

Two stones and a boulder made a bay
 And a rubbishy stick a boat,
And frigates, caravels, pinnaces
 Would enter there and float,

Would anchor off our palmed coast
 Or founder and go down,
And companies would come ashore
 To build a holy town.

Columbus came, Balboa came,
 Vespucci and Cortez,
And there were deaths and burials
 And births and marriages . . .

Kit Thurber came and I, I came,
 And we built a shore of dreams,
As many boys in many lands
 Have built on many streams . . .

And now I pass in time of war
This river hung in fog,
Where two bare-legged, wading boys
Caught once a log

And made of it a monitor
For conquering the South —
And all those memories today
Are bitter in my mouth.

O river Thames, my river Thames,
Bitter you lead away
Into a fog, into a dark,
To a death we used to play,

Pupils of malice, sons of war —
Preparing to be hurled
Into a grave of agony,
The children of the world . . .

So come once more through the fringe of
trees
Where long ago we came —
Leave life behind, Kit Thurber, come!
Death is the game!

1916

The Thunder-Bringer

America, you cannot do without me! —
I have come back again,
Shaker of men,
And where I tread
Between the living nations and the dead,
My bold young eagles of the west
Rattle their wings about me
And, like a clashing legion, breast
The tumult of my enemies.
These are my weapons, these,
O you who doubt me:
The beaks of my young eagles against the fiery
 beast,
Their claws against the dragon of the east,
Their eyes and wings against the infested seas!

I am The Man! —
Take me, America! — the irresistible, the re-
 quisite!
Nothing shall harm you, nothing can,
If it results in Me.

I am the perfect fit
For all your moods,
Shooting a slug of solid slang
Into every wall of the whole shebang:
American enough
To pull a bluff
And to keep on bluffing till I win;
Or to parley with philosophy;
Or to be natural — a hearty, rough
Man of the woods;
To use both enemies and friends
All to my ends;
To thrust my chin
Into any face
In any place,
And to make the round world farther ring
My fame than that of any king;
To keep down age and ease and fat
By a try at this and a try at that;
To do my thinking in my hat;
To do my talking with a click
Of a trigger-jaw and a loaded stick;
To be never weak and always strong;
To be always right and never wrong;
To be a whirlwind on the way
Toward second place on Judgment-Day;
To make myself God's punishing-thong,

His winnowing fan:
The thunderbolt American!
Eagles, arouse my country from her sleep,
That she shall leap
Awake and keep her faith with Me
Who am her Destiny,
Me! Me!
Shaker of men!
Then —
Who in heaven can doubt us,
Who in hell flout us? —
Rattle your wings about us
Wildly as you can —
My Country and her Man!

1916

The Light-Bringer

This is a time of death and blinded pain;
And men, as if half-slain,
New-bleeding from old scars,
Stare at delirium
With empty eyes
And can no longer tell how patient come
Into the skies
The counselling stars.

These be my weapons in the fight:
The invincible nights and days
(My bright flag signalling their points and rays)
And the one proud profoundest gun,
The blazing unassailable light
Of the sun!

O my own people! — if we dare to be
Humanity,
If our preparedness be first within,
If we be resolute to sever
The heart of courage from the heart of fear —

Then we shall hear,
Above the din,
The only trump of victory,
Not for the day, not for the year,
But forever.

1916

Republic to Republic

France!

It is I, answering,

America.

And it shall be remembered not only in our lips
but in our hearts

And shall awaken forever, familiar and new as the
morning,

That we were the first of all lands to be lovers,

To run to each other with the great cry

Of recognition.

Bound by no ties of nearness or of knowledge

But of the nearness of the heart,

You chose me then.

And so I choose you now

By the same nearness . . .

And the name you called me then

I call you now —

O Liberty, my Love!

1917

The Home-Land

(From the French of Émile Cammaerts)

It's a certain voice, it's the sound
Of a bell in a distant tower,
It's sunlight on the ground
Through trees or after a shower,
It's a certain roof under a certain sky,
The fragrance of the path of a certain street,
A steeple with a farm kneeling nearby,
The feeling of the grass under the feet,
The fragrance of the path of a certain street,
The flash of a look, the faltering of a hand,
A something from the past, too quick to under-
stand,—

It's what one feels and cannot say
Even when one sings,
Though that's the nearest way,
It's all those things.

It's what one tastes and sees,
It's what one breathes and hears,
Tobacco, bread and cheese,

Bright leaves, a wind that veers,
The common sights and sounds,
Dogs barking, people greeting,
A mug of ale that pounds and pounds
A table at some meeting —
It's what one feels and cannot say
Even when one sings,
Though that's the nearest way,
It's all those things.

It's the body's very best,
It's the heart-beat in the side
For children at the breast,
It's remembering those who died,
It's the ardor of the way,
It's the savor of the song,
It's the dream, aching to stay,
And the passion, to belong,
The sower's will to reap,
The lover's will to keep —
It's what one feels and cannot say
Even when one sings,—
Though that's the nearest way,
It's all those things.

1918

A Cantic of Praise

A Canticle of Praise

(A salutation of bugle and drum)

*The First Cantor (to the continuing solemn, low
beat of the drum)*

Sing in thanksgiving, a song of the Lord
Who moves in His might through the feet of His
horde.

(The drum ceases)

O clap your hands, you people, and O you hills,
give praise

For the coming of His glory, the mystery of His
ways!

Look and you shall see the Lord, though your eyes
be dim!

Sing and you shall hear the Lord — in His Battle-
Hymn!

The People (singing)

“ Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of
the Lord;

“ He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes
of wrath are stored;

“ He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword;
“ His truth is marching on.
“ Glory, glory, hallelujah!
“ Glory, glory, hallelujah!
“ Glory, glory, hallelujah!
“ His truth is marching on.”

The Second Cantor

O clap your hands, you people, and O you hills,
give praise!

An end is come of Egypt, an end of evil days.
Under the red sea again that covers all vain things
Are drawn the intolerant, intolerable kings.
Behold, their drowning chariot-wheels, those imperial wills,
Give praise, O you people, and clap your hands,
you hills!

(A salutation of bugles)

Give thanks for lads who held Liège, the gate,
While Europe shook amazed,
Those first, those garlanded, those sons of fate!
O let the name be praised
Of the town where the conquerors met the Belgian
heart,
Till France came, and Britain came, to do their
part!
Liège! That name! Name it with a shout!

The People

Liège!

The Second Cantor

Again —

The People

Liège!

The First Cantor

And what were they fighting for, fighting to defend?

They were fighting for the homeland, world without end —

Not for the monster, the devourer, the state,
But for everybody's homeland they held Liège,
the gate,

Their home and your home, well you all know it —
Yet hear it in the echo of a Belgian poet . . .

The Second Cantor (as a bell rings softly)

“ It's a certain voice, it's the sound

“ Of a bell in a distant tower,

“ It's sunlight on the ground

“ Through trees or after a shower,

“ It's a certain roof under a certain sky,

“ The fragrance of the path of a certain street,

“ A steeple with a farm kneeling nearby,

“ The feeling of the grass under the feet,

“ The fragrance of the path of a certain street,

“ The flash of a look, the faltering of a hand,
“ A something from the past, too quick to under-
stand —

“ It’s what one feels and cannot say

“ Even when one sings,

“ Though that’s the nearest way,

“ It’s all those things ”—

For which France came and Britain came

To do their part,

And Russia, Russia,

With the bleeding heart . . .

*Both Cantors and the Musicians (singing in uni-
son, first boldly, then faintly, slowly, to the
air of The Volga Boatmen)*

Hear the boatmen on the Volga,

Hear them singing on the Volga,

Hear the boatmen on the Volga . . .

The First Cantor

Hear them, those forgotten men, men with bare
hands,

Who fought for their own and for other lands

And in Mazurian marshes, in snow and in sleet,

Saved the British and the French from de-
feat! . . .

Remembering Russia, let us not mistake

Her hopeful, crucified heart-break!

In our ease of victory, let us give thanks

To those peasant-soldiers, those Russian ranks
Who, betrayed by their masters, yet fought and
fought again —

And dared at last the estate of men . . .

Let us be humble and own to them our debt,

Lest we be arrogant, lest we forget

Who gave to us our wider cry against imperial
wills —

Praise them, O you people, remember them, you
hills!

The Second Cantor

And why is every freeman every freeman's
friend,

If not for every homeland, world without end!

“ It's the body's very best,

“ It's the heart-beat in the side

“ For children at the breast,

“ It's remembering those who died,

“ It's the ardor of the way,

“ It's the savor of the song,

“ It's the dream, aching to stay,

“ And the passion, to belong,

“ The sower's will to reap,

“ The lover's will to keep —

“ It's what one feels and cannot say

“ Even when one sings,

“ Though that's the nearest way,

“ It's all those things.”

(*A long roll of drums*)

The First Cantor

And what would have become of all those things,

Where would they be, by the will of kings?

Over them all, a tide would have rolled

An ocean of iron, if the kings controlled . . .

But the men of France and England heard the flood,

They raised human dykes up, dykes of flesh and blood,

Building, ever building, when some would give way,

Another and another, till the flood should stay . . .

And O the holy river

Whose calm name shall ever

Be a name — by which to pray!

Stand! Uncover!

Stand, every lover

Of France and of Britain and of home today

And name that river, that immortal river,

Once for the first battle, once for the second,

Both of those battles which the foe never reckoned,

Let high heaven hear you say —

The People

The Marne!

The First Cantor

Again —

The People

The Marne!

The First Cantor

Stand, yet stand —

And name the command,

The everlasting answer

That has saved Alsace!

Miraculous answer,

Agonized answer,

Solemn as a mass!

Cannon! Machine-gun! Liquid-fire! Gas!

But Verdun answered —

Indomitable answer!

They shall not pass!

Remember it! Speak it —

The People

They shall not pass!

The First Cantor

Again — with all your voices —

The People

They shall not pass!

(A roll of muffled drums)

The Second Cantor

And now your own are answering . . .

Listen to them clear —
Saying in their graves,
“ *Lafayette, we are here* ” —
Your young, your quick,
Your dead, your dear —
O say it, say it with them,
Deeper than a cheer,
Say it as an anthem,
Say it as a tear,
A wreath, a crown —
Lafayette, we are here,
Say it as a prayer —

The People

Lafayette, we are here.

The Second Cantor

Say it as a trumpet!

The People

Lafayette, we are here!

(Trumpets blow)

The Second Cantor

Give praise for America,

Final, mighty, sure,

Whose heart, as the strength of ten,

Dared to endure!

Be glad of her patience,

Slow to wrath . . .

For love shall be given
To a land if love it hath —
And from the land that hath not
Love for aye
All that it hath
Shall be taken away . . .
O be glad for America,
Whatever they say,
America, to whom the world
Turns for love today . . .
So remember St. Mihiel —
Argonne — Grandpré —
And the tide at Château-Thierry
That rolled the other way! —

The First Cantor (with an accent of cymbals)

O the catalogue of victory,
The catalogue of cheer,
City after city
Which the world holds dear —

The Second Cantor

Jerusalem, Bagdad,
Rheims, Monastir,
Strassburg, Metz —

Both Cantors

Free!

The Second Cantor
And that city by the Piave,
That city by the sea,
Venice, delivered,
Delivered Italy!

The First Cantor
And river after river,
Line after line,
The Aisne, the Oise,
The Meuse —

(A final sharp challenge from the bugle)

Both Cantors and the Musicians
The Rhine!

(The cymbals cease)

The Second Cantor
Cities and rivers
Evermore to be
Hymns of the happy,
Songs of the free . . .

The First Cantor (with an increasing drum-roll)
O sing, now sing a song of praise,
A song of no nation now, of no narrow ways —

(One quick drum-beat)

Both Cantors
The song of the world —

(Another single drum-beat)

Both Cantors and the Musicians

The Marseillaise!

(A final drum-beat)

The People (singing)

“ O now arouse, ye sons of a world of light,

“ To greet the day your glory comes!

“ Though the might of the tyrant advances,

“ And though hate be the beat of his drums,

“ Though hate be the beat of his drums,

“ Shall the tread of his legions appal you,

“ Though trampling the fields of your home,

“ Though near and nearer yet they come —

“ Hear the lips of your little children call you . . .

“ To arms, ye sons of light!

“ From mountain to the sea,

“ March on, march on, sons of the world —

“ Till all the world be free!”

1918

The Day

Not as they planned it or will plan again,
Those captains whose command was forged in hell,
Not as they promised for their terrible
Obedient horde, Teuton and Saracen,
Bulgar and Slav, not as they dreamed it then,
Masters of might with sobs for pæans to swell
Their darkening sway, but like a far-off bell
Undoing night, the day has come for men.

The people's day has dawned, a deeper sky
Than any day that ever rose from sea,
And more than any captain dared is won,
And this great light that opens carries high
More justice than we dreamed of, even we
Who still are blind awhile, facing the sun.

1948

Jews of the World

*“ Dear, fainting Jesu, now to thine own seed
Creep home again — who else can understand
thee? ”*

—ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

I make amends to you . . .
I have disdained you,
I have made a mock of your misfortunes,
Money-lenders, money-gatherers,
Hoarders of might.
But today you come from a new Nazareth,
Baffling the Pharisees,
Understood by the humble and meek,
Earning the world
Against usurers,
Winning the world
Against Cæsar,
Saving the world
With the mere heart of man,
Bringing the world
Peace.

1919

Prepare!

O human hearts,
Beating through fear, through jealousy,
Through pride, through avarice, through bitter-
ness,
Through agony, through death,
Beating, beating
Shame and forgiveness,
Bewilderment and love,
O my own country,
My new world,
Prepare,
Prepare —
Not to avenge wrong
But to exalt right,
Not to display honor
But to prove humility,
Not to bring wrath
But vision,
Not to win a war
But a people,
And not one people only

But all peoples,
Not to exact justice from your enemies only
But from your friends,
And not from your friends only
But first from yourselves!

1919

Shantung

In the west you free Jerusalem,
But in the east you sell
T'ai Shan, the Holy Mountain . . .
I hear a temple bell
Breathing, like a perfume
From its exalted place,
The presence of Confucius,
The wisdom of a race,
The future of a people
The only one of all
Whose conquerors are conquered,
Whose history is tall —
Taller than Fujiyama,
Taller than Koyasan,
Taller than that red sun
Consuming from Japan . . .
And my face is in the flowers
And my brow is in the dust
And my heart is sick with perfume
And I weep because I must,

I weep for you, O masters,
O conquerors, O slaves,
As I hear you stir in China
The quiet of your graves.

1919

An American

They buried him in Russia . . .
When he tried
To ask what he was dying for,
No man replied.

“What’s it all about, mate?
Why can’t I know
If I’m on the side of”— Answer him,
Silence and snow!

1919

Russia

He shall be our brother and be our friend,
And hunger and war and woe shall end!

The word, the word, of heart, of mouth,
East and west and north and south,
Sharp on the mountains, rolling on the rivers,
Wide on the steppes the white word quivers,
Leaping, laughing, singing, humming:
Christ is coming, Christ is coming!

Make ready your houses, make ready your doors,
Yours, Mother Mary, and, Peter, yours!
Martha, Joseph, Judas, awake —
Christ is coming, for your sake!
Christ is coming through the land
With white lilies in his hand,
Lilies of plenty, lilies of peace,
Coming to see that grief shall cease.
He shall touch with his lilies every head,
Giving love, giving bread.
And he shall be our little czar
With angels trumpeting his car,

And he shall speak — and no more sin!
And the Kingdom of Heaven shall begin.

But who is this with a savage face? —
What man has come, in Jesus' place,
With a voice not saying words to bless
But crying in the wilderness?

John, John, John, John,
Preparing the way for the Lord!
He has put his hairy raiment on
And he drinks from a bitter gourd.
He faces the Herods, he frightens them dumb —
John, John, John has come . . .

And a million innocent, a million wise
Wait for the star and watch it rise.

O slay our first-born, men of the west,
You shall not slay at Mary's breast!
Send your soldiers, send your might,
They shall not find him in the night.
And yet the Russian shepherds know
And Russian wise men in the snow
That John is prophesying true
And Christ shall come — in spite of you!

1919

To a President

If this was our battle, if these were our ends,
Which were our enemies, which were our friends!

1919

Jehovah

Brand him for what he is,
Have done with him,
Cast out Jehovah!
Cast out the author of eternal war,
Slayer of little children and of joy!

If there be churches that will harbor him,
Burn them, destroy them, rend them stone from
stone!

If there be men and women who will hide him,
Love them with laughter, crowd into their hearts
Till there be room for nothing else but love!

If there be dread of enemies,
If there be godly and terrific wrath,
Know first the mightiest enemy of all,
Cast out the jealous god,
Cast out the king of war,
Cast out Jehovah!

1919

The Resurrection of the Body

The people of the earth are mighty
And their time is at hand.
They do not believe how soon,
But I believe.

The rulers of the earth are stubborn,
But their end is at hand.
They dare not think of the end,
But I dare.

The dead of the earth are past reckoning,
But they are still to be reckoned with.
They do not seem to be living,
But I live.

For to dream and to dare
Is the only life,
And to dream and to dare and to die
Is the resurrection.

1919

The True Pacifist

Come at me with your scorn,
And strike me with your rod —
Though I be slain a thousand times,
I will not fight my God.

1919

The Mask

I saw the old lie look up again,
With its mask.

O truth,
If they must have masks,
Where is yours? —
That you may seem beauty
To heroes
And to poets
And to women.

1919

The Eclipse

Between the sun and moon
Passed the earth
On a January night during war,
And the face of the moon changed —
Reflecting blood.

But the sun was not put out . . .
Unlike me, it took the whole thing
Largely and lightly.

Gardening

Go and plant a lilac-tree
With water and with sun.
Gardens are a surety,
Gardening's never done.

Shut the gateway and let pass
The windy throng of war,
See the sky in the water-glass
Ripple as before —

A rosebud bending at a cloud,
A mountain and a tree,
A shadow telling what a shroud
Rain can be.

Would you bring unruly folk
Into a ruly land?
Would you plant the poison-oak,
To show a poisoned hand?

Shut them out and have no ruth,
Bid them all good-bye,

All who have not learned the truth
That beauty dares to die.

And if ruin come awhile —
Then let earth renew
The gradual beauty, mile by mile,
Which is always you.

Epilogue

To a Volunteer

And are you off to war, Pan?
Dance well among the dead!
For there's a shaking in your shin,
And now the tufts of hair begin
To crest upon your head.

A crest becomes a helmet, Pan,
A hoof becomes a sword,
And pipes become a bayonet —
And so, to feel the music jet,
You drill before the Lord.

And are you off to war, Pan? —
I thought you long had shed
That gory happiness of horn
You felt before the Christ was born —
Yet are you off to war, Pan? —
Dance well among the dead!

The Faun that Went to War

He hid his hoof in an army shoe
And he marched and marched and marched,
He did the things they told him to do—
Though the deep of his soul was parched
For leaves with morning, dripping through,
Yet he marched and marched and marched.

They told him the stars would drip no more
Till he killed and killed and killed,
So he left the ways that he loved before
Where his leafy cup was filled
And he threw it aside and he went to war
And he killed and killed and killed.

And he killed a man and saw him fall,
And he wept and wept and wept
For a body once as young and tall
As dawn when the whole world slept . . .
He had killed the highest heart of all
And he wept.

The Singing Faun

I had come down from the hill of trees,
Down from the prophetic leaves,

And I had seized among men a weapon
And sung among men a brave song,
And I had broken the weapon and thrown it away,
Singing among men a braver song,
And was tall with the pride of my singing,

When one who was wounded like a scarlet tanager
Looked up at me from his blood,
Looked up and murmured in so still a voice
That my singing was undone,
My weapon of song broken:

*“Go back to the hill of trees,
I need you there,”* he said,
*“Go back to the prophetic leaves,
My singing faun!
Must I be stripped of everyone,
Must I be stripped of you?”*

*Must I be so forsaken and condemned?
Shall no one listen for me to the trees,
Shall no one speak for me among the leaves?"*

And I came back to the hill of trees,
And I came back to the prophetic leaves.





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